Hebrew Union College

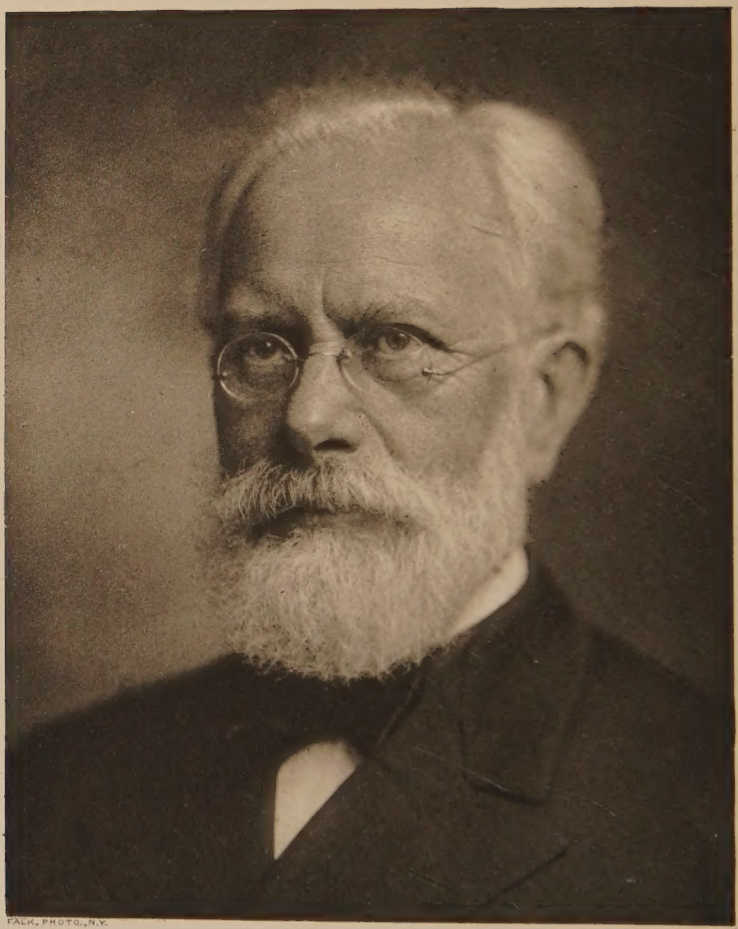
and other addresses

K. Kohler

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

AND OTHER ADDRESSES

DR. KAUFMAN KOHLER
PRESIDENT, HEBREW UNION COLLEGE



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Kaufmann Kohler

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BY

DR. KAUFMAN KOHLER

PRESIDENT, HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

CINCINNATI

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TO

MY ALL-BELOVED WIFE

MY FAITHFUL HELPMATE IN ALL MY ACTIVITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

IN LOVING DEVOTION

PREFACE.

In selecting the following Addresses and Discourses to appear in book form, I had two objects in view: The one is to give permanency to those memorable events in the history of the Hebrew Union College, of which it has been vouchsafed to me to be the witness, or participant, beginning with a time when the great founder of the institution, Isaac M. Wise, was still shaping its destinies and down to the period of twelve years or more during which I have served as its President. These addresses may perhaps serve to record these landmarks in the progress of the College and to some extent also in the progress of American Reform Judaism in general. The other object I had in view was to acquaint the general public with the views and aims of Reform Judaism and with the great personalities who, "with their leaders' staves digged the well of living waters" to quench the thirst of the people and their flocks.

Other discourses in this collection may be of interest to the reader as far as they cast some sidelights on various phases of Jewish history and Jewish lore.

The collection closes perhaps not inaptly with a tribute of esteem paid by the writer on behalf of the

Board of Governors, the Faculty and the student body of the Hebrew Union College to the memory of Dr. Solomon Schechter, the late and much lamented President of our sister-institution, whose recent demise has created a void in the ranks of the scholarly world which cannot easily be filled, and who will ever shine as a star of great magnitude among those who increased the knowledge and enlarged the scope of the Torah.

May this collection contribute its humble part to a fuller understanding of the aims and needs of American Judaism.

Dr. K. Kohler.

Cincinnati, March, 1916.

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1.

A WELL OF LIVING WATERS.*

THIS IS indeed a most glorious Sabbath for you, one that must needs fill your hearts with joy and pride, for you see your fondest hopes realized, a ten years' arduous and mighty work, the long-cherished plan of our energetic and enthusiastic friend, the noble, untiring efforts of a few eminently generous-hearted and whole-souled devotees to the Jewish cause, crowned with the most brilliant success. I hail the opportunity offered of expressing my deep and sincere recognition and admiration of what you have achieved. As I recall the many difficulties you had to cope with, the many drawbacks and obstacles you had to overcome, the fears and apprehensions you had to dispel, I can not but say: The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor! Behold, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, opposed from all sides, is an established fact, a power working for the good of Israel. The College, its bright jewel, at first looked at with sneers and skepticism, has stood the test. It has gone through its critical teething period. It stands there as an ornament of American Judaism, a foundation of hope for the future, a testimony of religious zeal and devotion, by its

*Sermon preached at the Plum Street Temple on the Sabbath previous to the first Graduation Exercises at the Hebrew Union College, July, 1883.

intrinsic value and usefulness outshining any other institution of liberal-hearted American Israel! And I feel confident that it will become the focus of American learning, heart and center of American Judaism. Subject and text of my discourse are suggested by to-day's Sabbath lesson, which reads: The Israelites arrived at the well, that is the well of which God spoke to Moses: "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." Then Israel sang the song: "Rise up, O well! Sing ye unto it! The well the princes dug, the nobles of the people dug it with their staves, with the lawgiver's staff."

Literally taken, this is a genuine Bedouin song, an exultation over the discovery of water, so precious a boon for the exhausted caravan on the parched desert soil. Still, to us the Bible is no mere collection of Oriental poetry. It is our treasury of inspiration in accord with our own joys and needs. Its tunes correspond to the throbbings of our heart. It is the book we consult on all the living issues of the age. And hearken! Has the old desert song become faint? I hear the melodious strains still vibrating in our ears: "Rise up, O well, dug by our princes some three thousand years ago! Sing ye unto the well of living waters that rushed forth, bright and pure, from Sinai's rock at the touch of Moses, the lawgiver's staff!" Thank God, the well has not been dried up, but, in unabated forces, re-echoes the divine call: "Oh, ye thirsty, go for the water!" Like Miriam's well in the legend, it has followed us on our march through the lands and ages. It has accompanied us across the sea. Not Israel's flock

only, but the entire civilized world has rallied around it to draw life and vigor, comfort and inspiration, freedom and truth from its cheering heavenly fluid. But we have remained faithful keepers and guardians of the perennial fount. And now an exclamation of joy goes throughout the camp of American Israel: "We have found water for the young flock.". We need not fear for the future. Planted on the living waters of knowledge of God, American Judaism is sure to flourish.

Consider for a few moments with me, what lent Judaism its matchless strength, its invulnerable vitality? By what magic spell did the small shepherd-people successfully battle with the great nations of heathendom, storm their walls and fortresses, and force them all to surrender their gods, their religious and philosophical structures to Israel's great Lord of hosts? It was all the work of that wondrous well of the Torah. Paganism rendered life a barren desert, offering no living water for the thirsty soul, no comforting and refreshing word of cheer from above to all the sighs and cries of man's longing and craving spirit. It displayed but wild fancies, forms of a weird imagination to mock him, Fata Morgana to lure him into ruin and despair. Heathenism was a system of illusions under hierarchical rule, keeping the masses in bondage and darkness. To inquire and to know was to give it a death-blow. Before the dawn of reason its specters fled. At the approach of philosophy it faded away.

Judaism, on the contrary, kindled the lamp of reason and knowledge, long hid in man. Jewish

revelation swung the windows of Heaven wide open to throw light on man's path. Instead of mysteries it offered instruction, instead of a blind faith, living words of truth. In place of fear of a blind, passionate will, or of an iron, relentless fate, it planted love for and confidence in a God of truth and righteousness. It engaged the thinking faculties of man, telling him: Follow your reason, and you can not help finding God on the top of the ladder. In nature's beauty and order behold the hem of the garment of His glory. Unlock all its secrets, and you will ever more admire the wondrous ways and proof of His ever-working loom. Gaze at the mighty procession of ages, at the majestic pageant of centuries and epochs, and you hear His commanding voice marshalling all the forces behind the scene. Within your bosom, heaving with gladness or sadness at the soft whispers or awful thunders within, you feel His touch; in sunshine and storm of destiny, in the triumphs or defeats of history you recognize His countenance smiling or frowning upon the works of men. You are not forsaken nor forlorn. God, however high and lofty, is ever near you. All your toils are means of triumph, all your struggles pathways to victory. The world is built on the fiery wheels of God's chariot of justice. It is ever moving, ever progressing. You need not wait and crave for a world beyond the grave. Right here on earth you are, as His child and co-laborer, bidden to build a kingdom of truth and righteousness, and the end is not reached until the earth is full of knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea. This is Judaism. And does this not harmoniously chime in with all human progress and civilization? Does

this not exactly accord with all the lofty ideals of men, with the noble endeavor of the ages, with the higher aims and goals of every science and art? Knowledge, therefore, ever was the powerful ally and friend of Judaism, "Speak to wisdom, thou art my sister," was its watchword. Indeed, wisdom spread its bright wings over the cradle of Moses in Egypt and over King Solomon's Temple resplendent with the beauty of Phoenician art. It unveiled its secret to high-soaring Isaiah, and enlightened the Jewish exiles in Babylon. Open the pages of the Bible, and you discover everywhere the imprints of hoary Babylonian lore. Read Talmud and Midrash, and you hear the echo of Grecian philosophy and science. Look at the wealthy merchant-city of Alexandria. How nobly do the Jews there strive for a harmonious blending of Greek thought with the Sinaic truth! Or go still further down in Jewish history. What a brilliancy of light radiates from the industrious fellowship of Arabic and Jewish scholars! Its bright rays illumined the dreary night of the Middle Ages, and helped to kindle the first sparks of our much-boasted modern enlightenment and culture. Everywhere the Jews were the banner-bearers of civilization, the pioneers of knowledge. And why? Because light was the vital element of Judaism, learning its great propelling power. Like a true sage, Israel gathered knowledge from every source in order to brighten up the mental horizon and reflect new splendor on God's throne. And this constant influx of new ideas, this intermingling with many streams of knowledge prevented the waters of the Sinai rock from becoming a stagnant pool, a

petrified creed. Judaism remained an ever-living fountain of truth, fresh and clear like a crystal spring. Christianity sacrificed the truth, subordinating reason in order to win the hearts of the masses. Judaism never compromised, never surrendered, proudly saying with Abraham in the Haggadah: "Though the whole world be on the other side, I, having God and truth with me, am in the majority, and shall win the battle." What harm can free investigation and criticism do us? Let those be alarmed whose belief is like a broken cistern which holds no water. Let those fear who persist in drinking the stale and putrid water from the wornout buckets used when far away from refreshing springs. Earnest search after truth and goodness can only lead farther up to the great Fountain-head of all wisdom, to the Sublime Intellect. Many a problem during our age has been anticipated by our old Jewish thinkers, and where no difficulties and doubts have sprung up, we can afford to meet them fairly and squarely. The foundation of our faith will never give way. As long as man yearns for the truth, the well of Sinai will refresh his soul in the wilderness. Revelation is an ever running stream, never to be exhausted. Each age, each student has a share in it. Our age thirsts for fresh and clear water from the perennial well of humanity. Why not pour it out freely from Sinai's rock? Why not open wide the floodgates of knowledge, so that people will espouse our cause, and drink with delight from the fount of salvation and truth? Says God: "Gather the whole people together, and I will give them water."

Yes, all people; not the priests merely. No distinction between priest and layman, except that the one be teacher and the other the learner. Like air and water, truth belongs to all. All were called to stand at the foot of Sinai and listen to the word of God. Common instruction is the only check to bigotry and fanaticism. Ignorance is a disgrace among Jews. Next to love of God comes the commandment to teach the children. Each parent is to be a teacher in his household; each Jew a missionary of truth—a priest of humanity. The first Jew Aristotle, the greatest of the Greek sages, saw and spoke to made such an impression upon him that he took the Jews as a class of philosophers. A people of thinkers, they were called by Hegel, the German philosopher, who was anything but fond of them. Constant training of the mind, continued cultivation of knowledge, rendered them, indeed, the world's intellectual aristocracy. To it their financial success, their material prosperity, their important position in the world's commerce is due. Still, we have not gone through the fiery furnace of trial and suffering in order to be rulers of the money market, accumulators of wealth, but to be a light to the nations, disseminators of spiritual treasures all over the earth. Seats of knowledge, institutions of learning, are our mines of riches, our reservoirs of power. They are our armories and strongholds, our standards of victory, our watchfires in the camp. Wherever the lamp of the Torah was burning, Judaism felt safe. A seat of learning in Jamnia was all Jochanan ben Sakkai asked for, when Titus' soldiers threw the

firebrand into the Temple. And when, under Christian emperors, Palestine no longer offered a shelter to her own children, Babylonia's flourishing academies became shining stars of hope. No sooner did the East show signs of exhaustion, than the schools in the West turned out to be light-houses to storm-tossed Israel. With juster pride than the king, Israel may boast: "Within my kingdom the sun never sets." And it was always the highest ambition and privilege of Jewish wealth to patronize study and help promulgate knowledge.

It has now devolved on American Israel to create a focus of learning. German Judaism, the pioneer of reform and progress, the nursery of modern thought and learning, is apparently on the decline. The men to courageously uphold the flag of world-conquering, enlightened and progressive Judaism are daily growing less in number and strength. It is your opportunity, American Israelites, to bring about a soul-stirring revival like that of brilliant Spain. Unshackled by blind belief in authority, untrammeled by fear and prejudice, on freedom's holy soil, at the cradle of a new humanity, in a land which in every respect tends to create a larger type of manhood, you can render the Jewish religion a fountain of truth, of inspiration and hope to rally and refresh all the flocks of mankind. Which religion corresponds so closely to the broad, liberal and philanthropic aspirations and sympathies of the American heart, to the vigorous, practical grasp of the American mind as Israel's pure monotheism, which has its deep roots in the remotest past, and

holds forth its bright and glorious promises for the distant future of mankind? And what but Jewish scholarship possesses the key to unlock the treasures of the Bible and of all religious and philosophical systems built on it? Knowledge only renders man truly free and independent; knowledge only, a thorough acquaintance with our priceless world-wide literature; an extensive study of our unparalleled history inspires us with a love and enthusiasm for our time-honored faith and for our lofty mission for humanity, whose thorn-crowned martyr-priest Israel has been for all these centuries, and whose triumphant Messiah he is to be.

A Jewish University, therefore, uniting and representing the best Jewish wisdom and scholarship, disseminating knowledge, sending out faithful and earnest propagators of truth, brave champions of faith and enlightenment, true missionaries of Judaism, forms the supporting pillar and the crowning pinnacle of American Judaism. It is our safeguard and source of strength. In it all our material success and social prosperity must culminate. And where on this blessed continent is there a city like this as broad in its social views, where a community in which such sweet harmony exists among various sects, where Jewish temples and Catholic, Methodist and Unitarian churches so fraternally grasp each other's hand to let people feel that they all walk under one paternal roof, beneath the broad canopy of heaven? Well, then, the beginning has nobly been made. The waters of Jewish knowledge are freely and lavishly offered. It is no longer a well of strife and

jealousy, a well of animosity and contention. It is a well of harmony and peace, around which the shepherds rally amicably with their flocks. Well sing ye unto it: Spring up, O well, and spread blessing near and far. Let princes and people, all the noble-souled and liberal-hearted assist in digging and maintaining it. May it realize all our hopes and fair visions! May it lead Jewish America from a state of barrenness to intellectual riches, to a true appreciation of God's gift, to the bright Pisgah height of humanity, so that Cincinnati will be blessed by all Jewish communities of America as a mother city in Israel, and all lands will join America in singing the great song of thanksgiving to God.

Amen!

2.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

WHAT A JEWISH INSTITUTION OF LEARNING SHOULD BE.

"MAY your strength and your power to accomplish good ever increase." In this form in which the Jew of old used to utter his thanks, let me express to you, gentlemen of the Board of Governors, my grateful appreciation of the signal honors shown to me in this solemn hour, the proudest moment of my life, and of the kind words expressive of your regard and your confidence addressed to me while placing the Hebrew Union College, the object of your highest pride and solicitude, into my charge. I am fully conscious of the arduous task, the great duties and responsibilities which devolve upon me, and all the laudations I receive fill my soul only with all the greater humility and awe in view of my untried powers in this new field of work. But it is the desire of working out, with what of experience and knowledge God has granted me, the highest destinies of the college, that prompted me to give up a thirty-four years' service in the ministry and follow your call to the presidency. It is no small matter, I know, to be successor to Isaac M. Wise, the founder of this college, whose powerful personality achieved

*Delivered at the Hebrew Union College, Sunday, October 18, 1903.

wondrous success where many other great leaders failed. Nor indeed do I flatter myself that I possess the qualities that made him the leader of leaders and the master-builder in American Israel. In one thing, however, I dare say I am not behind my illustrious predecessor, and that is in ardent love and zeal for Israel's sacred treasure, the Torah. Ever since I sat, a young pious lad, at the feet of my sainted teachers, Rabbi Samuel Bondi, in Mainz, of Jacob Ettlinger, in Altona, and Samson Raphael Hirsch, in Frankfort-on-the-Main, and others, it was my highest ambition and aim to lift up the standard of the Law and disseminate its truths; and while under the influence of more extensive study and independent research, my views have since undergone a mighty change, the well-spring of my love and enthusiasm has not dried up, and with unspeakable joy and thanksgiving to God do I hail this hour as the realization of my holiest dream. But, with the Psalmist, I exclaim: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name belongeth the glory!" It is the diadem of the Torah, the crown of Jewish learning, that I long to see again placed upon the brow of modern Israel. "The Torah is thy life and the length of thy days." The Torah, the fount of light and joy, the comfort and mainstay of the Jew in darkest time and amid direst distress, must again occupy the central place in our hearts and homes and be rendered the life-center of the Jewish community.

With the Torah as the rallying point of the race, the Jew is unconquerable and irresistible; without it he is bound to go down and be lost, whether in free America or under Turkish or British suzerainty.

The Torah establishes his claim as the God-chosen servant of humanity; his material success only provokes jealousy and hatred, notwithstanding all his philanthropic endeavors. To the promotion and propagation of the Torah, to the sending forth of the Testimony, the message of Israel's God sealed upon the lips of disciples, I shall, under God's guidance, consecrate my life and my labors for the rest of my days. But what is the Torah which Israel is commissioned to teach and to propagate? And what should a Seat of Jewish Learning be to the Jewish community and to the world at large? These are, I think, the two pivoted questions which I, as one who is expected to mould the character and destiny of a large body of American Israel, ought to answer today.

I.

Allow me to quote the words by which you have so aptly and tersely characterized the work before me, and my attitude to the past history of the college: "With Dr. Wise and Dr. Mielziner, of blessed memory, the era of construction has passed, and now the period of development begins." Indeed, Dr. Wise has built well and enduringly, and the institution which he reared stands firmly established upon the broad and solid foundations of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. What Abba Areka did for Babylonia, Isaac M. Wise did for America, and well may he, like him, be called Rab, "the Master." Imbued with his spirit and zeal have his disciples, well nigh a hundred in number, gone forth all over the land as eloquent preachers and indefatigable workers to win the rising generation for Israel's Only One and

impart new life and vigor to American Israel. All this beautiful sowing and planting, this great spiritual harvest, is the unique work of the organizing genius of Dr. Wise, who, with his heart and his ear ever close to the people, and understanding their need, created, with the scanty means at his disposal and a few helpers, the institution which furnished the congregations with rabbis and leaders such as they required and yearned for.

To-day new conditions have risen, and new and higher claims are put upon the college. The old generation, mostly of foreign birth, with a deep religious feeling ingrained from childhood, with fervent religious needs and deeply-rooted religious convictions and customs, is fast dwindling away. A new generation, thoroughly American in education, culture and tastes, sits in the pew waiting for inspiration from the pulpit. It does not want mere oratory which delights and thrills for the moment, but has no lasting effect. It wants the fire from heaven that sets every fibre ablaze with fear of God. It wants power. Whence, then, should come the power to the preacher unless he has drunk deeply at the fount of Jewish knowledge, unless the Beth ha Midrash, the institution of learning, represents, above all, power. "The Torah is nothing if not *power*, victory-boding strength." Our various Jewish institutions of learning, wherever they may be, lack the essential element of efficiency—they lack power. As long as the Jew's life and thought were centered upon the Talmud, and his entire conduct regulated by the Rabbinic Code, the Shulhan Aruk, the Yeshibah or Rabbinical Academy fulfilled its high purpose

by equipping not only the future Rabbi, but every capable son of Israel, with the knowledge of the Rabbinical law and supplying him with intellectual and moral fibre to brave life's struggles and temptations nobly. The Talmud was the citadel of the medieval Jew; behind its ramparts he was safe and strong, fit to cope with every emergency. But what is the Talmud to the modern Jew that the most precious hours of the student should still be spent on its hair-splitting dialectics, upon that "vast, bottomless sea" out of which only few fortunate divers know how to bring the precious pearls forth to the light of day? It is but blind adherence to traditional custom which accounts for the fact that the theological schools of Breslau, Budapest, and Berlin, not to speak of the more conservative seminaries, lay all possible stress and value upon these barren Halakic subjects, the divine origin and character of which are believed in neither by teacher nor pupil, whereas the essentials of the Jewish faith, the great religious and philosophical problems of the age, Divine Revelation and Authority, Inspiration and Higher Criticism, the relation of science to faith, of comparative religion or of Christianity to Judaism, are timidly shunned as a "Noli Me Tangere!"—"Touch me not." And what is the consequence? The men that have gone forth from these seminaries may possibly have enriched the learned world with a treatise on some obscure Hebrew, Arabic or Samaritan work, and turned out to be fine linguists, perchance, or archaeologists and palaeographers well versed in literature and able to handle manuscripts and palimpsests, but they have missed their vocation. They

fail to impart life to the dry bones of Judaism. They lack the power of a great, all-enrapturing, all-vivifying truth. There is nothing of the prophetic spirit in them to make Judaism a power for an age weakened by doubt and chilled by apathy. One of the chief reasons for the sad state of religious life among the Jews of Europe to-day, for the lethargy and dissolution that has taken hold of many Jewish communities in Europe, is that the theological institutions and the preachers have relaxed in religious vigor.

The theological school must be the power-house to supply pulpit and people with the dynamic force of an all-ruling, all-electrifying religious truth. It is not enough that Bible and Talmud, Halakah and Haggadah, Hellenic and Arabic literature, Philosophy and Cabala, History and Literature, Liturgy and Homiletics be taught; they must all be turned into vitalizing sparks of truth. They must all be transformed into spiritual helps and lifts to unfold the inherent power of Judaism in its manifold stages and phases of growth. It is in this light that each teacher, by showing the organic connection, the inner relations between his branch of study and the others, can single out the potencies, the spiritual, moral and intellectual kernel beneath the shell, and so lay bare the deeper impulses and show the higher motives that gave lasting value and zest to each specific study and movement. In other words, the theological curriculum must mean not the registration, but the profound appreciation, of all the religious forces that were at work throughout the various ages and lands, while at the same time our own religious needs and our own religious consciousness should form the object of our foremost

solicitude. Take, for instance, the Talmudic marriage and divorce laws, most of which have lost their practical significance for us. There is, as the late Dr. Mielziner has so well shown, an intrinsic ethical force attached to many of them, which we cannot afford to ignore. The same is the case with the fringes and phylacteries, the Zizith and Tefillin, our fathers wore. They, too, present in the Haggadah an ethical valuation of the ceremonials which renders them gems upon the diadem of Judaism, more than most of those who still wear them on their body are aware of.

In very fact, it is as a means of conveying power and spiritual force that certain portions of the Halakah and almost the whole of the Haggadah should be taught, and not for mere mental gymnastics. For thousands of years the treasures of coal lay an inert and seemingly worthless substance in the bowels of the earth, until the scanning eye of genius turned them into sources of power. There is a wealth of spiritual and ethical thought buried in the Midrash and Talmud which must be turned into power, whereas at present it is treated as dead matter. But in like manner do most of the branches of Jewish learning wait for the creative mind that extracts from them the element of power. Let but the human side, the moral sentiment, the deeper life-problem in Jewish history or any of the Rabbinical, philosophical or mystic writings be touched, and the driest subjects become interesting, instructive and fascinating.

Yes, a store-house of spiritual power the theological school must be, and it is foolish and wrong to evade the discussion of vexatious problems of the

day. You fail to train men of power for the ministry, if you ignore or simply condemn the Higher Biblical Criticism and Comparative Religion and Law as detrimental to the faith or to reverence for the Bible. To use the expression of Abtalion, "Be on your guard lest the disciples drink of the turbid waters and undergo spiritual death and the name of God be profaned." Never before was the path of the preacher beset with such difficulties, such struggles and doubts as today. Questions which formerly occupied only the mind of the scholar in his study have become the great concern of all thinking people. Each day discloses some long-hidden document in the earth or some startling phenomenon in the sky or the sea that threatens to undermine the very groundwork of faith and calls for a resetting of the Bible and a reconstruction of the whole idea of Revelation and Creation. The issue today is no longer between Reform and Orthodoxy, but between a world with God and a world without God. How, then, can the destinies of homes and communities, the guardianship of souls and the future of humanity be entrusted to men who, in a time when the foundations of morality are shaken and the peace of the world quivers under the fierce contest of ideas, lack power and principle, wavering and oscillating between agnosticism and belief, between Judaism and Unitarianism and a dozen other isms, because, immature in judgment, they have eaten of the unripe fruit of the tree of knowledge only to expose their own nakedness of soul? Rabbinical scholarship alone, however extensive, even inclusive of medieval philosophy, all the lofty thought of a R. Joshua ben Hananiah and

R. Meir, of a Maimuni and Crescas, fails to solve the vital problems for the seeker after truth to-day. He must have learned how to penetrate through the shell to the divine kernel and to view the whole process of growth, the evolution of matter and mind, as divinely designed and predestined, though necessitated by nature and following the laws that rule all things. He must, in other words, like Moses in the house of Pharaoh, receive the nurturing sap of life from the mother, the faith that gave him life, while the surrounding world offers him all the educating influences to render him a child of the age. Only then can he with a clear and firm Jewish convictions and principles be a staff of support to those ready to fall and a power to lead the erring and wayward.

Reform Judaism, especially, must be felt to be a power, the faith of manhood. It is calumny to say that the desire for assimilation or for a taste of forbidden meat created the Reform movement. The Reform pioneers, Geiger and Holdheim, Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch and Dr. Wise, were men of power, of principle, who brooked no compromise and never yielded. They had the courage of their conviction and throughout life displayed consistency and steadfastness of purpose. It is Romanticism that wants picturesqueness; that renders Judaism and Synagog a museum of antiquities, preserving the forms of the past fossilized while the spirit has fled long ago. Such conservatism fails to engender power, because it lacks conviction; it only creates hypocrites, men that halt between the two sides. Legend tells that Abraham, who broke the idols of his father courag-

eously, braved the fire of Nimrod's furnace and was saved by the power of his faith in God, whereas Haran who wavered, not knowing whether to bow to the idol of Nimrod or to worship Abraham's Only One, went into the fire and was consumed. An age of distraction and discrepancies like ours requires the power of a positive conviction and intensity of faith. Reform Judaism stands for a religion of power which alone saves man when in doubt and trial. Reform Judaism broke the shackles of ceremonialism and legalism, because, following the lead of the prophets, it declared Judaism to be not a system of laws and statutes, but the law of truth and righteousness. And it is this championship of truth and righteousness which alone made the Jew the mightiest power in the world. The whole history of the Jew in dark and in bright ages, the very life of the prophets and martyrs, of the sages and the saints in Israel was an exhibition of valor and heroic strength.

So is the attitude of the true reform Jew today—of the Jew who reclaims the entire so-called Christian civilization for Judaism, and does not plan a retreat before the foe by way of East Africa or of Asia—that of power, power of the spirit that will not yield to number and to physical might. Reform Judaism is hated and feared most by the anti-Semite, because it is aggressive. It refuses to simply take the defensive. It wants to assert its power; neither shall it rest, until the whole history of the world will have been reconstructed on the principle of evolution, which beholds in Christianity as well as in Islamism offshoots of a world-conquering Judaism.

II.

But here I have already touched upon the second point which I wish to emphasize as another of the chief aims of a Jewish institution of learning. One of the ever-reiterated maxims of the Rabbis is, "Light – that is the law." The charge which is ever brought forth anew against Judaism by the followers of St. Paul is that it is harsh, unrelenting law and its main characteristic is legalism or ritualism. This charge is untrue. To the Jew at all times his Torah was "learning," a matter of reason and knowledge. Just as the Jewish seers of old appealed constantly to reason and common sense in order to establish God's throne in the heart of the universe and the heart of man, so did the sages of the Talmud and the philosophers of the middle ages accentuate ever anew the reasonableness of the Jewish faith. As Miriam stood on the banks of the Nile watching the babe Moses in the floating willow basket, so does wisdom, so does knowledge ever stand in sisterly love and solicitude watching and fostering the progress of the Jewish faith—is a beautiful remark of the Midrash. Hence, religion to the Jew never was blind faith upon the acceptance of which follows heavenly reward, but it is the light of God allied to the intellect, as is the moon that shines at night a corollary of the bright orb of day. The greatest Rabbinical authorities, therefore, were accordingly bold, independent seekers after truth. Never could mysticism in Jewish circles entirely obscure reason in its free and unimpeded sway. And as the first rationalists and Bible critics were Jews, so did none hail the new era of

reason and enlightenment with greater delight than the son of Israel. How singular, then, that the Jew has gone out with the lamp of knowledge and the torch of research to light up every field except his own. How little does the average Jew to-day know of his own literature; how scant is his knowledge regarding the Book of Books which he handed forth as a compass to man on his wanderings over the wide globe!

The interpretation and elucidation of the Biblical writings in the light of modern research has all been left to Christian workers. The Jew for whom the term Amhaarez ("Ignoramus") was the most humiliating opprobrium in olden times, has lost all interest in his Torah, has forgotten how to read his own sacred signs. And while our age has produced Jewish scholars and investigators of the first rank in every branch of learning and literature, those that have contributed essentially to the understanding of the teachings of Judaism, or written standard works on Jewish life and Jewish thought outside of the Talmudic sphere, are scarcely to be found in our own camp. Worse than this, the whole field of Hellenistic writings and the immense number of Apocryphal books which cast a flood of light upon the pre-Christian centuries of Jewish history have been altogether neglected by the Jewish student, and the consequence is that the whole point of view from which Jewish history and literature have been written by Jewish authors is narrow, onesided and often altogether false. Neither the Talmud nor the New Testament are fully understood by most of them. On the other hand, non-

Jews have translated for us large portions of our Rabbinic, all of our Hellenistic and Apocryphal literature and composed for us whatever there exists of systematic works on Jewish theology and ethics, on Jewish life and Jewish thought. And now, pray, read the classical, the standard works on universal history, or the history of the nations, the races, the various epochs of human culture and civilization; go through the libraries of the world to learn what has been done by and for humanity all these hundreds and thousands of years—it all bears the imprint of Christian thought and sentiment; it is all written from the point of view of the New Testament, and rarely with anything like fairness for the slandered, persecuted and outlawed Jew, all claiming the greatness and glory of a new life and light for the star that rose over Bethlehem, and denying to the Jew the merit of having prepared the soil and fertilized the atmosphere with the seeds that yielded all the rich harvest for Christendom. And yet, what is the whole New Testament, the entire work of the Church during the first four centuries of its existence but Jewish teaching and practice transferred to pagan soil and appropriated by the disciples of the Nazarene who never claimed to be anything but a Jew, a believer in the confession "Shema Yisrael!" That very broadness and universality and love, the preaching of a Church Universal which is claimed for Jesus and Paul, his visionary herald and hierophant, was Jewish, the blossom and fruit of Alexandrian Judaism, long before the Church had risen to continue what the Jew had begun and to reap what the Jew had sown.

We have moved all along in the narrow circle of Rabbinic literature and failed to see what the Jew in his love for God and humanity had done in days gone by. We have altogether too long walked in the valley and neglected to look around to see all the beauty and grandeur on the heights designed and prepared by Israel in other times. It is high time that we reclaim what is our own. The Jew has at all times been the true cosmopolitan, the banner-bearer of the light of a truth for all peoples. He blended Greek culture and Jewish thought; he harmonized Hellenic philosophy with Hebrew faith; he stood as mediator between Aryan and Semite, working for true unity of the human race, for the unity of God, the Father of all men. And he alone, amid the raging warfare between races and sects, nations, classes and creeds, is destined to interlink the world by his universalism, by his cosmopolitan religion and his broad conception of God and man. Let me in this connection, quote the words of an English writer, Frances Power Cobbe, penned twenty-five years ago at the very time when George Eliot wrote her "Daniel Deronda" to become the godfather of Zionism: "Let Reformed Judaism relight the old golden candle-stick and set it aloft and it will give light unto all which are in the house, not only of Israel, but of humanity. A glorious picture may in God's providence await such purified, emancipated Judaism." . . . "In the present disintegration of all religious opinion," she writes in the preface of her book, *The Scientific Spirit of the Age*, "Judaism may yet become a progressive faith and solve the great problem of combining a theology consonant to modern philosophy with a worship

hallowed by the sacred associations of the remotest past."

Out, then, of the valley beneath, where we have too long, by a fault not of our own, groped in darkness, to the sunlit heights of our prophetic mission! This must be the watchword of the modern Jew. And where else but in America, the land of freedom, and among people eager to listen reverently and fairly to every message of truth, may the Jewish theological school be expected to become a lighthouse to illumine the path of all seekers after truth. In the light of the first verse of Genesis, as commented upon by the Midrash, the whole process of the world's evolution appears as the unfolding of the spirit of God, and the story of the Wandering Jew, the Messiah of the nations, receives a new meaning under the searchlight of the all-penetrating lamp of knowledge—evolution.

O ye sons and daughters of Israel, blessed with wealth! What an abundance of beneficence could you pour out upon generations unborn, what a powerful incentive to research, to the elucidation of Jewish history and thought, could you hold out to the student if you would, as is so generously done for other creeds, endow chairs or create lectureships in connection with the Hebrew Union College, for Bible and Assyriology, for Old and New Testament research, for Hellenistic and Cabalistic, Arabic and Karaite literature, for Jewish theology and comparative religion, to make our work here broad, comprehensive, world-uplifting and world-enlightening. Our college thus equipped would become an armory like "David's tower with its thousand

bucklers and shields of mighty men built for defense," an impregnable fortress of Judaism and a challenge to Anti-Semitism in high or low stations—a true laboratory of Jewish thought, an authoritative power to reconstruct the history of the world and reclaim for the Jew his rights and his titles as factor of civilization.

III.

And yet a college for the training of Rabbis stands for something higher still. Greater than all knowledge and wisdom is life itself, with its thousand duties and opportunities. A college that does not prepare its disciples for the great issues, the stern realities of life, by inculcating virtue and ennobling that which is best in man, sentiment, fails of its purpose, whatever it may do for the mind. For the orthodox Jew who observes all the commandments of the law, of which he counts as many prohibitions as the year has days and as many mandates as the body has members, the whole of life was holy, sanctified by observances that crowned him with the diadem of priesthood. For the Reform Jew, life is no less holy because it is vocal with duty, and God is in every joy and grief, in every trial and temptation, to prove his character and manhood. Ought, then, he who is to bring the divine message of comfort and blessing to hearts and homes in affliction and happiness, ought the young aspirant to the ministry not learn in due time to unfold these deeper powers of the soul with which he is to perform his holy task as priest and shepherd of his flock in order to enable him to offer healing and tonic of the spirit to those that are in

trouble and woe? There must be a religious atmosphere about a Jewish seat of learning which gives warmth to the heart and wings to the emotional nature of man. The spirit of piety and reverence must pervade the whole mode of teaching. What was dear and sacred to the fathers must still be treated with tender regard and reverence by us, however obsolete and superstitious the practice or the belief. The broken pieces of the old tablets of the Law were deposited in the holy ark alongside of the new, the Rabbis tell us. Our young reformers too often labor under the great shortcoming that they were not brought up in an atmosphere of religious life which derived sanctity from its many rites and ceremonies, and so they are callous, inclined to a rationalism which chills the heart and blunts the finer tendrils of the soul. Over against the cold intellectualism which tends to undermine reverence for authority, faith and the longing for God in prayer, so natural to every child-like soul, we must institute regular religious exercises, devotional readings and other modes of spiritual uplifting. The future Jewish minister must learn how to wing the soul up to God in prayer. The picture of Jonah, the prophet of God, who lies asleep in his corner, while all the rest kneel in prayer, each before his God, in the storm that sweeps over the sea, is not a very flattering one to the Jew of to-day.

But greater than piety and prayer is sincerity, uprightness before God and man. As the ark of the covenant was inlaid with gold from within and without, so, the Rabbis say, should every Jewish scholar or teacher be of pure gold, from within and without,

free from all hypocrisy, from time-serving or man-pleasing. Men of character and of courage of opinion, of steadfastness and sincerity of purpose, do we need as leaders and banner-bearers of truth, men whose souls burn with the fire of a holy conviction, so that as "the elect ones of the sons of Israel," they can only be glorified but not consumed by the fire of God, because there is but the pure gold of principle and no dross in their soul. Yes, the Hebrew Union College should not only be a seat of learning but a schoolhouse for religious, social and civic virtue; it must give us not merely wise and intelligent leaders who understand the requirements of the time and supply the needs of the congregation, but men of unbending strength of character and truthfulness, God-fearing men who hate sin and show their inner calling by true self-denial, as well as by dignity and comity.

And yet one feature, hitherto greatly neglected, I must not fail to mention. Judaism does not, like the Hebrew, "read only backward." It looks forward to the future and wants to take a firm grasp of the life that now is in the light of its great mission. All the knowledge the future Rabbi acquires must be subordinate to the higher task of practical communal service which he is expected to assume. He must obtain an insight into social science in order to be an efficient worker for the common good in this complex life of ours. Justice is to Judaism more than love; its work for the poor and needy must be done on the principle of righteousness, not charity. The study of sociology and the science of charity are as indispensable equipments for him who is to

be the spiritual leader of a congregation, as are pedagogics and psychology and homiletics to him who is to conduct a Sabbath-school and occupy a pulpit. Yet here, too, a culture of soul and the fostering of large sympathies condition true success. And all of one piece the golden luminary of Jewish learning and life must be.

Need I state that in order to accomplish all this, nay, to pursue these aims, something more is required than the few hours allotted to the student of the college who is at the same time obliged to pursue his course of studies at the university? Under the present conditions, progress of the college is simply excluded. A thorough change of the system is peremptory. "Out of the valley to the heights of a higher mission" must be the watchword of the administration of the Hebrew Union College.

It is of no great consequence, under the present conditions, how many young men shall each year go forth from this institution, or in how many years they may be fitted out for their holy vocation. One single man of power, with a lofty conception of his calling, one single individual with the prophet's fire in his soul and a live coal from God's empyrean upon his lips, one to whom the ministry is not a "crown for his own aggrandizement nor an axe to dig with," but the highest mission of life, because he has a message from the Lord of Hosts to bring to his people and his time, is worth more than a dozen graduates who simply wait for an incumbency to furnish them bread. Oh, that the hunger for the word of God, the craving of the spirit may be felt by all who attend, by all who love and support the

college. Oh, that especially you, people of Cincinnati, loyal to your tradition, would create and foster a religious atmosphere around the college, endow it generously and give us the best of your sons to lend prestige to the ministry!

I rejoice to think that American Israel has two institutions of learning which hold forth the promise of imparting to Judaism new power, new light and new life: the Seminary in New York, new and full of promise, under the leadership of the powerful personality of Schechter and enjoying the support of princes in Israel, princes in philanthropy as well as in wealth and influence; and ours, a democratic and therefore truly American institution appealing to all Israelites of the land for aid and counting upon the active support and co-operation of all the rabbis and scholars who champion progress and reform as well as learning. It glories in its tradition and record, and I confidently rely upon the tried and tested services of my associates of the faculty to help me in bringing the Hebrew Union College up to the highest requirements and the highest standard of efficiency.

Oh, that all the progressive Jews of this wide land may unite to make the sanctuary of the Torah, upheld by the shekalim contributed by each and every Israelite, a center from which life and light, warmth and power flow throughout the whole body of American Israel, uniting and fortifying Judaism, and illumining and conquering the world.

And may the grace of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it! Amen.

3.

A DAY OF PRECIOUS MEMORIES AND BRIGHT HOPES.*

I CONGRATULATE you each and all upon witnessing this day which marks a new era in the history of our blessed institution and, under God's guidance, in the history of Progressive American Judaism. In the words of Isaiah (xxviii. 16), I heard the Lord God speak to us: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation; he who hath faith shall not be in haste." A double message this auspicious event has for us: Precious memories and bright hopes.

An exquisite story is told in the Midrash of King Solomon: When he had finished his gorgeous Temple on Mount Zion and solemnly dedicated it to the service of the Most High, the mighty gates would not open nor would the fire from heaven descend to kindle the sacrifices upon the altar, until he had sent up to the heavenly throne the petition voiced in the 122d Psalm: "O Lord, for my father David's sake let me, Thine anointed, not be put to shame! For the sake of him who gave no sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids until he had found the place worthy to be the dwelling place of Thy majesty, let

*Address at the laying of the corner stone of the new Hebrew Union College Buildings, at Cincinnati, Ohio, April 25, 1911.

Thy glory now appear to us!" So must we, while laying the corner-stones to the new college buildings, recall in grateful remembrance and reverential appreciation the years of heroic struggling and striving, the persistent aim, the lofty ambition and the triumphant achievement of the deathless master, Isaac Mayer Wise, and all the great things he and his illustrious compeers, the great Reform pioneers, and all his co-workers did for the promotion of the Jewish faith and Jewish learning, and particularly all that he accomplished for the training of efficient and zealous teachers and leaders for American Israel in those halls of learning hallowed by the memory of his precious life work. And as we today anticipate in gladsome strains the approaching day that tells us to "enlarge the place of the Torah's tent and stretch forth the curtains of the seat of learning that it may spread to the right and to the left," the longed-for moment that bids us exchange the narrow quarters of the old building for these spacious grounds on the city's heights kissed by the early sun, where we may imbibe new health and new light from the purer air and the expanded horizon, and the thrill of creation's joy from field and forest round about, does not the echo of the ancient song come to us saying: Ali Beer Enu lah, "Rise up, O well of living waters, sing unto it!"—the well which Isaac Mayer Wise hath digged with his staff of leadership and the nobles of the people, the princes of learning at his side! Rise up from Mattanah to Nahaliel and from Nahaliel to Bamoth—from the valley to the sun-lit heights, from the lowland to the hilltop

that overlooks the wide land, so as to quench the thirst of the thousands of truth-seeking men near and far and render the Torah, the gift of Israel's genius, the inheritance of the nations round about!

Yes, upwards and onwards, O American Israel! On the path which thy Reform pioneers, the regenerators of the faith, have mapped out for thee! Upward and onward with the banner of light and of religious progress towards Israel's great goal on humanity's Zion and towards the realization of America's highest ideals!

Thanks to the generosity and princely munificence of our friends, we are today laying the corner-stones of the two magnificent structures that are to stand forth as monuments to Israel's accumulated wisdom and to Judaism's everlasting faith, two sanctuaries of the Torah, the Library and the Schoolhouse of the Hebrew Union College, reminding us of the *two shrines* carried before the Israelites in the wilderness, the one containing the bones of Joseph, symbol of *loyalty to the past*, the other holding the tablets of the Law, symbol of the *faith in the ever-living God*. Loyalty to our great past and a wide outlook into the future! This be our watchword.

Loyalty to the past! This is the thought suggested by the corner-stone laying ceremony, as we deposit the precious records of the past beneath the structure. Oh, how precious are the records of the life of the Jew! How full of grandeur, how unique the history and the literature of the Jewish people! Yet what invested them with such all-surpassing interest and charm? Wherein consists the special

value, the singular greatness attached to the sayings and teachings of Israel's seers and singers and sages and masters, to the tales and traditions of its good and wise men and women hoarded up in its written volumes or in the memories of the people? Why do we treasure them more highly than all the priceless crown jewels of the world? Why feed our minds on them, enrich our souls? Why do they inspire our lives more than other human products? There is but one answer to this: *Religion* is the life of the Jew. Religion and religion alone preserved and kept the Jew alive all through the ages and the lands. The *Torah*, not mere *Law* but *Learning* and serious search for truth, became his fount of life and light and of continuous rejuvenation. Not the *Jewish People*, which relapsed again and again all through the centuries into idolatrous and superstitious practices and beliefs, constitutes the soul and essence of Judaism, but the God on high who redeemed it ever anew, forcing it, as it were, into His service as witness and herald of His glory; the God of Abraham, the first world-missionary; the God who spoke out of the fire of Sinai to Moses and made Isaiah and Jonah preachers to the wide world long before Church and Mosque arose; the God of truth for the glorification of whose name myriads of Jews like unto Akiba offered up their life-blood, and to the power and higher knowledge of whose nature thousands like unto Maimonides and Gabirol gave their brain and their strength; the God of humanity whose covenant is to bind the nations and the races into one bond of brotherhood. This is the corner-stone

and pinnacle of Judaism. This is the precious corner-stone upon which we build the College and the future of American Israel.

Yet, as this God of ours rose before the ever-advancing spirit of seer and sage to ever loftier heights of vision, as Israel's religious truth ever progressed with the mental and spiritual development of the people under the influence of the various civilizations it came in touch with, and through assimilation of the best ideas and highest ideals of each phase of universal culture it participated in, so shall we call all the knowledge of our day, the results of every new research, the splendor and beauty of every new thought and world-view into our service to clarify, to deepen and to enrich our ancient faith to render it, as Scripture says, "our wisdom and our understanding in the eyes of the nations," never resting until Judaism has attained the topmost summit of philosophy and culture, and is recognized by all as the loftiest of truths.

We need not be afraid of historical and critical inquiry which casts its search-light upon Bible and Talmud, upon every law and ceremony, upon every custom and conception of bygone ages, upon the whole process of development of religious and social life within and without the sphere of Jew and Judaism. Deep down in the past the corner-stone of Judaism is laid by the Bible which begins not with the first Jew, but with the first God-seeking man, and so does Judaism's *outlook* extend to the furthermost ends of the earth, to the highest goal of humanity. This civilization of ours is not Christian, as the Jewish

nationalist in common with the church maintains. It is flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone and spirit of our spirit. It is built on Sinai's rock, fertilized by our martyr's blood, fructified by our thinker's brain, nay, centered upon Israel's monotheistic truth, whatever of pagan folly and medieval barbarism may still cluster around it. Though the Jew wore, and still wears, the martyr's crown of thorns, he marched as conqueror through the lands, holding the lamp of reason, the torch of science in his hand to become the preceptor, the liberator, the humanizer of Christendom. And his day of triumph is approaching. His sublime yet simple faith is fast conquering a reluctant world. Never before did progressive Judaism have such glorious opportunities, such mighty possibilities as it has to-day. The very soul of modern thought, the idea of *evolution* leads unerringly to the establishment of Israel's truth in the heart of the thinking world. The cry for righteousness and justice that comes from all parts of society to-day, in opposition to the unequal and unstable principle of love, points to the ultimate victory of prophetic Judaism. Occidental civilization is coming more and more towards our mode of thinking, towards the belief in Israel's God of truth and righteousness. And should we now leave our post, surrender our mission as priests and heralds of humanity's God to withdraw into a world of our own, narrowed in by views of medievalism, shunning the free and untrammelled contact with Occidental culture which alone gave freedom to man and dignity to woman?

Forward or Backward? A living faith or deadening formalism? Sincerity of conviction or intellectual dishonesty in our synagogal worship and in our theological studies? This has again become the issue to-day, and we of the Reform wing are in no fear as to the outcome. True, we are no longer in the majority, as we were when our College was founded. All the more necessary that we stand firmly together. Reform has been, and still is, Judaism's saving power. "Not by might nor by numerical strength, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," has ever been Israel's watchword.

We need but a center and focus of light, a *power-house of the spirit* to give us men of faith, of principle and of firm conviction, a school-house whose windows are open to the light of truth, of knowledge and of research that streams in from all sides to make each discovery a stepping-stone toward the great future, promise and pledge of the day when all over the earth Israel's God will be One and His name be One.

Here in closest proximity to the University of Cincinnati our College shall, with God's help, work hand in hand with the city's institutions of learning to become an enlightening force for all, a high tower of learning to herald forth the harmony of reason and faith, a bulwark of Progressive Judaism and an arsenal of the knowledge and fear of God for all men.

So may here rise the fortress of our faith with the banner of Reform Judaism unfurled. So may, with the erecting of this monument to Israel's everlasting truth, a great revival be wrought in our camp, a

consolidation of all progressive forces of American Judaism, a renewed sense of our great responsibility and duty as God's elect. And particularly let us, fellow-teachers and students, at this solemn moment, with consecrated hearts, lay the foundation of our sacred heritage, the principles of our faith deep down in our innermost being, that we ourselves may become disciples of the Lord, teachers and guides of the people, builders of humanity's temple filled with the spirit of God and the valor of true manhood as Jews and as Americans. And may the grace of the Lord be on our work, and the work of our hands establish Thou it, O God, and speed it with Thy blessing. Amen!

4.

THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE.*

ONE of the striking episodes of the history of early Israel brings before us Balaam, the heathen seer, as he goes forth to hurl his fiercest curses upon the young nation that had just emerged from bondage to freedom; yet no sooner does he from the lofty hilltop, where he had taken his stand, behold Israel's tribes encamped alongside of each other, held together by an unseen force, than there came upon him the spirit of God, and he burst out into a song of praise echoing through the coming centuries: "How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob! thy tabernacles, O Israel!" And here our sages remark: Before his mental vision loomed up the school houses and synagogs with which Judaism's genius makes its world-conquering march through the lands and the ages. Of this wondrous story I am reminded at this glorious sight of the assembled representatives of progressive American Israel from all parts of the land, of the various cities, who have come in imposing numbers to participate in the dedication of this gorgeous new home of the Torah, and thus to manifest their interest and their pride in the sacred work

*Address delivered at the dedication of the new Hebrew Union College Building, January, 1913.

of promulgating and perpetuating Israel's eternal truths, to which these magnificent structures, the school house and the library are being consecrated to-day in due solemnity. You, the friends and benefactors of the college, have given us new inspiration, a new impetus and incentive in our efforts on behalf of the Jewish faith and Jewish learning, by giving us these spacious halls, brimful of light and salubrious air, on these elevated grounds, where the view extends far over hill and valley, over field and forest, to enlarge the mental horizon. And in congratulating you upon the proud monument you have erected here, an ornament to the city and a credit to American Israel, I offer our thanks to you in the familiar Hebrew words:

"May your powers to do good ever increase!"

I am especially gratified to have my honored friend, the illustrious president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, Dr. Schechter, with us to participate in our dedication ceremony and thus give evidence of the spirit of amity and fellowship that should ever exist among scholars who are to follow the maxim: Out of all dissent in views, mutual appreciation and friendship must emanate in the end, if truth be the common aim and object. And may I not repeat here what I said when participating in the dedication of the New York Seminary: There is room and necessity for both schools, the Conservative and the Progressive, for, as it was said of the Schools of Hillel and Shammai: "The words of the living God are in both." We may

advance along different lines and under different standards, yet in front of Mount Sinai, in the great principles of Judaism, all Israel is one.

Glorious and admirable as are the achievements of American Israel everywhere when the rearing of majestic houses of worship is asked for, or the large institutions of philanthropy demand great sacrifices, yet the planning and planting of a Rabbinical School started by the master genius of Dr. Wise forty years ago, met but slowly and scantily with the encouragement and warm support and appreciation to which it was entitled. At last I see the hope and anticipation I voiced in my inaugural address as Dr. Wise's successor realized: "From the valley below to the sunlit heights, side by side with the great educational institutions of the city." This was the burden of my message nine and a half years ago. In giving our college its fitting site on these lofty and beautiful grounds you have not merely put a precious finishing crown upon the monumental work of its sainted founder. You have raised the very vocation of the rabbi and the position of the Rabbinical School in the estimate of the people, who are more or less inclined to regard the same as a mere professional pursuit of the rabbinical career in which the community is little concerned. You have indeed proven yourselves to be worthy heirs of "the men of the great Assembly," who earned the title of greatness because, we are told, they restored the Torah to its pristine glory. Well, then, the marvelous history of the Hebrew Union College has been unrolled to us

with stirring eloquence by the worthy and genial son of the great founder, Rabbi Jonah Wise. I hear the message for the new era that has opened for the college in its splendid new home, in the words of Deutero-Isaiah "Behold, the former things have come to pass and new things do I announce. Sing unto the Lord a new song." Three leading thoughts are suggested to me by these monumental structures: The loftiness of Judaism's truth, the broadness of Judaism's scope and the largeness of Judaism's view and outlook.

Whenever I ascend these hills and stairs leading up to this sanctuary of the Torah, I seem to hear the call that came to the prophet: "Go forth and stand on the hilltop in the presence of God," and the voice resounds in my ear: "On the mountain heights God is seen." There is a decided tendency in our enlightened age to lay all the stress on doing works of love and philanthropy in slums and settlements and underrate that for which our faith and Torah ever stood, creating heroes and martyrs such as no other religion or race could ever glory in, the power and sublime grandeur of truth. A little over three years ago, Dr. Eliot, the ex-President of Harvard University, created a stir throughout the English-speaking world by an address in which he declared Christianity, with its dogmas, to be antiquated, accentuating instead the need of a new religion in which the deity stands for compassion and helpful love, whereas the age demands as a new virtue the passion for truth. Evidently the great leader of thought in America failed to take due notice of

the views and teachings of Judaism, whose history is nothing but a continuous and unique display of its passion for truth. From patriarch to prophet, from seer and singer to sage, from saintly master to martyr and mystic, throughout all the centuries of Jewish history there goes an ever unstilled longing and searching, suffering and sighing for truth as the Seal of God. By the thousands the Jewish people gave their souls, and by tens of thousands the sweat of their brow, for the truth of their only One God. And in this zealous and keen pursuit of truth the Jewish teachers and scholars in Alexandria, Palestine and Babylonia, in Arabia and Spain ever strove to liberate the mind from the shackles of the letter and thus deepen, sublimate and spiritualize the faith so as to reconcile religion and reason, the stern law of Moses and the lucid philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, and render them one light of divine truth. Not a new religion, but a constant renewal and rejuvenation of religion is the demand of ever progressive, ever expansive Judaism. To truth, then, the lofty aim and ideal to which the human mind ever aspires, to which religion, philosophy and science will ever beckon and lead, to God, the Fountainhead of all truth, whose majesty ever walked with Israel to dwell in His school houses and synagogs, we dedicate this institution of learning, this new home of the Torah. For, to us the Torah is not the immovable, immutable Law as typified by the stony figure of Moses in Sargent's fresco on the walls of the Boston Library. To us the Torah is the Jewish

lore in its continuous process of growth and evolution, expounded, interpreted and revealed ever anew to become a vital force, a living truth, a living faith and hope for the age, as the Midrash says: "Like a degree of the King fresh from his hand and mouth." And because it is the handwriting of God in many languages, our studies are not confined to the Hebrew and its kindred Aramaic tongue. As the Ten Words of Sinai flashed forth, according to our rabbis, in seventy tongues of fire to reach the seventy nations on earth, so do we want Judaism to be studied in all its phases and epochs, in all national and religious spheres that have caught echoes from Sinai's thunders and flashes from Sinai's lightnings. In fact, we must so reconstruct the past and translate it into terms of modern historical, philosophical and psychological research as to see in Sinai the ladder leading up to heaven, or, to use a striking expression of Geiger, "to see God rising from the dark earth to the serene heavenly realm of the spirit." We must, like Balaam, look down from the lofty hilltop, the pinnacle of historic research, to follow the groping and climbing of men and ages in order "to see the truth sprout forth from the earth," and then behold God on high, in His sublime majesty, with the eyes of faith, with the positive conviction of a sincere believer face to face. We must have a positive theological system, such as Dr. Wise and Dr. Einhorn, among the Reformers, and Dr. Schechter among the Conservatives, have ever insisted upon: to offer leader and people, scholar and student, what the polar star is

to the mariner, the guiding principle, the source of inspiration and aspiration, of solace and strength in life's struggles and strivings.

But all theory is worthless without impelling to practice. Israel's God is a God of life, and the Torah is nothing if not the law of life, not for the Jew only, but for man, a life of justice and righteousness for men of all classes and circles and in all spheres of activity. This is what Judaism on the heights of prophetic teaching ever pointed to, a religion that touches life at every point, broad as the earth and large as the human horizon. From Sinai's Law to the seer of Zion, through Bible and Talmud, through all system of ethics and sayings of wisdom of the Jew, there runs like a mighty torrent the cry for justice.

The first and the last thing the Jew ever had, and still has to battle for as the soldier of God and the champion of man, is righteousness. For 2,000 years the world has been misled by the New Testament accentuation of love at the expense of justice, and thus the very foundation of society and individual manhood, the basis of all moral and social welfare has been perverted, if not subverted, so that now the great cry shakes the earth from center to circumference: Give us justice! Establish righteousness in the relation of man to man which love, with its partiality and insincerity, will never readjust. It is this principle of justice that we, as exponents of Judaism, must inculcate with ever increasing force. We need no Christian sociologist or moralist to teach

us wherein true ethics consists, or what a life of social service means. The message of social justice, voiced by our great prophets with a vehemence of storm and strokes of hammer that shatter the rock, is echoed through our Haggadah and Halakah, and reverberates even in a Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lasalle of our days. It is Judaism's teaching for high and low, for rich and poor, for Jew and Gentile. And to this God of Justice and Righteousness we dedicate this house of the Torah, so that freedom and light should come upon it from all sides, and life and liberty, justice and peace radiate from it to enrich, to bless and to sanctify the life of Israel and humanity.

And finally, the third idea I take from the structures reared here to offer us such a grand, wide outlook is largeness of view and brightness of prospects for the future. It was not a mere phrase to rouse the sneer of antagonists, it was a great fundamental principle accentuated by Dr. Wise, when he made American Judaism his watchword and battlecry. He only emphasized what all the Reform leaders had in mind, that the Jew participating in our Occidental civilization as loyal and patriotic citizen has not, nor should he have, the feeling of being in dispersion, in Galuth. God's majesty does not forever dwell in the holy land, nor in the temple of Moriah solely. Wherever Israel went, God went with him, and while our face is ever turned in reverential awe toward the rising sun, whence we started on our world mission, we have learned from history that Westward wends the course of civilization's empire.

And America is the land destined to unite by its mighty grasp of friendship and peace the races, the creeds, yea, the nations of the world. America, with her largeness of territory and of life's resources and views, has broadened, and is ever broadening, the views of mankind. Her spirit of democracy has made the Jew not merely more liberal-hearted and liberal-minded than the average European Jew is; she has enhanced his love and zeal for a common-sense religion, for greater independence and a more outspoken individuality of man and for a higher idealism in woman. Thus American Judaism has become a liberalizing force in our entire social and national life, and its influence is making itself felt more and more, even in England and Germany to-day.

And, casting our glance over the entire modern civilization with its trend of thought, what is all scientific and philosophical research, what the world-revolutionizing discoveries and inventions, the divings and delvings into the beliefs and writings of a hoary past, the peering and prying into the mysteries of the soul and the realms of the unseen, but the prayerful cry like unto that of Moses: "O Lord, let me see Thy glory!"? And do not the concentrated efforts of nations and empires toward the betterment of life's conditions, the enlarged sympathies and the elevated standards of humanity, in spite of all brutality and carnage, in spite of all class and race hatred, persecution and prejudice, point to the realization of the great vision of our prophets of the time when the great Jewish principle of the unity of God

and the unity of mankind will be established in all minds and hearts?

We see the day dawning when our age of restless searching and seeking will learn to bow in awe before Israel's Only One; when out of the great melting pot of religions and races the Jew will come forth as the banner-bearer of a faith which, as it has shaped the world's actions and hopes to a large extent in the past, shall become the corner-stone of civilization in the future, rendering its truth and justice the salvation of the nations and the bulwark of humanity.

In the symbolic language of the rabbis, the realization of the great dream of the prophets of the end of history means that the Divine Hand that shapes the destiny of the nations will pile hilltop upon hilltop, and mountain peak upon mountain peak, to form the groundwork for Zion in order to have the mountain of the Lord established on the top of all the mountains. That is to say, the lofty ideals of all lands and civilizations must be combined into one great consummation of all human endeavors to form the basis for Israel's ideal of truth, justice, holiness and peace, the ideal of all ideals.

In view of this sublime mission, Judaism needs pulpits and propagandists of large vision and mighty intellectual and spiritual power, and, above all, a power-house of the spirit, a light-house of knowledge that reaches far out into the life work of the nations, an academy of learning which turns out men of wisdom and knowledge, men of principle and preseverance, of fortitude and firmness, men buoyed up by

the lofty ideals of the sage and seer of yore, by the heroism of a strong conviction and by profound love and zeal for God, for Israel and for humanity.

Great things, then, have you done here—a real work of Kiddush ha Shem, of glorification of God's name. Yet these very grounds here speak louder than words can of what is yet to be done for the maintenance, the expansion and further development of this institution. You must hold up our hands. You must continue to bestow your great generosity upon our college and manifest your interest in its steady growth in numerical and spiritual power and influence. You must complete the chain of our buildings here by adding to the two proud buildings the dormitory so urgently needed for the physical and moral welfare of our students. You must aid us in enlarging the scope of our work by endowing chairs for the various branches of Jewish learning, for Hellenistic and New Testament Research, for Sociology and Philanthropy, and increasing the number of scholarships for the encouragement of our promising young men. Thus we may look forward with confidence and bright hope into the future and anticipate the triumph of our great cause.

To Judaism, then, to Progressive American Judaism with its lofty ideals, we dedicate this college building, to the promulgation and perpetuation of Israel's truths, to the elevation of human nature, to the promotion of justice and righteousness on earth, to the vindication of the name and faith of the Jew, to the glorification of the eternal God, the Father of

mankind, we dedicate this house as a temple of divine knowledge and wisdom, and this chapel as its Holy of Holies. May the Shekinah ever rest here to fill the soul of each student and teacher with the fire of holy enthusiasm for truth and justice, and with the spirit of reverence and awe for whatever is holy and good. Let light stream forth from the treasure-house of Israel's literature to illumine the eyes and ennoble the souls of all who enter. May we all be consecrated anew to the service of God and man as priests of the Most High! Amen.

5.

ISAAC M. WISE, OR THE HEROIC QUALITIES OF THE GOD-CHOSEN LEADER.*

THE great men of history, the heroes of mankind, says Carlyle, show us in what they were or did the possibilities and potentialities of our own nature. In order to worthily commemorate the life of a great master, it behooves us, therefore, to single out those qualities in him which strike a responsive chord in our souls to make us aspire to the same high ideal and shape our lives after the pattern presented by them. In this spirit can the Founder's Day be best celebrated at the Hebrew Union College, the most enduring monument of the achievements of Isaac M. Wise, a source of light and of blessing for all generations to come. Which are then, I ask, the eminent qualities of the illustrious founder of this blessed institution of learning that made him among the great leaders of his generation the chosen instrument of Providence to organize and unify the progressive forces of American Israel, and gave him his place in history as the master-builder of Progressive American Judaism? I find the answer in the 89th Psalm, verse 20: "Thou spakest in vision to Thy holy one and saidst, I have laid My help upon the mighty one; I have exalted one chosen from among the

*Founder's Day Address, 1912.

people." Here you find the heroic qualities of the God-chosen leader defined. In a glorious all-absorbing vision, in luminous thought that lights up all the future for him there appears his life's task to the providentially chosen one to take hold of him and endow him with ever-increasing strength and courage, with indomitable energy and perseverance until all obstacles and difficulties are swept aside, and he stands forth as heroic victor with the seal of God's approval upon his illustrious career, and the people's acclamation as the elect one. In other words, those called upon to greatly and signally advance humanity must have the vision and foresight of the prophet and the power and courage of the hero.

The Midrash illustrates our text by referring first of all to Moses and pointing out the significant psychic process that made him "the father of the prophets." This is described in the words at the beginning of Wayikra: "The call came, sending forth its thrilling appeal to the elders and sages, yet only Moses heard out of the deafening noises the voice of the Most High calling him to perform his great task. And behold, he proved to be the mighty one, able to sustain the power to which others succumbed, and brave the opposition of a whole people, to break their idol and shatter the tablets of the Law on seeing them dance before the Golden Calf at the foot of Mount Sinai. His was the strength of will and perseverance to accomplish that wherein the whole people failed, the erection of the Sanctuary in the desert, and in his self-effacement he made the Torah his own, and God's glory to be reflected in his.

But this, continues the Midrash, was the type of all the God-inspired seers and leaders concerning all of whom the Psalmist says: "Bless ye the Lord, His messengers, the mighty ones in power who fulfilled His word, hearing His bidding." Indeed, like unto Moses, were all the prophets men of wondrous power and fearless courage, men before whom people and potentates stood in awe, because the words they spoke fell like thunder to shake the earth and like lightning to burn into the innermost conscience, like fire to consume the evil-doers and like a hammer to shatter hearts hard as flint. With their irresistible zeal and world-defying courage these heroic battlers for truth and righteousness, for purity and holiness, routed the forces of heathendom to rear the world upon new foundations of morality. Yet what was the secret of their unparallelled power? They were neither mystics, saints living in the clouds like the Hindoo Brahmins, nor proud sages, intellectual aristocrats standing aloof from the masses like the Greek philosophers, but God's messengers whose only strength and wisdom, wealth and dignity consisted in striving, struggling and suffering for the truth beheld by them on the mount of vision and thus serving and fighting for the God that called them. But, says our Midrash further on: "Not Moses and the prophets of old merely, but all Israel were chosen to be His messengers mighty in power to fulfill His bidding and propagate Sinai's truths."

Yes, the Jew is the God-chosen prophet among the nations of history, and his life throughout the centuries a continued heroic battle for the pure mono-

theistic truth, for righteousness on earth, for the purity of home and life's ideal of holiness. What is all "the sweetness and light that came from the Greeks" compared with the spiritual forces that came from the religion of Israel? What is the one Socrates with his martyr's death compared with the hundreds of thousands of Jewish martyrs who mounted the funereal pyre and offered their neck to the executioner's sword with the cry: "Shema Yisrael" on their lips; or with the myriads of Jewish sages who soared up to the highest realms of truth while ever holding fast to the sacred heritage of the past, ever bent upon enriching the minds of the millions of their brethren by every new acquisition of knowledge. Indeed, the Jew was the world's great hero, the unconquered conqueror of the nations, as long as religion endowed him with the power and courage to defy a world hostile to God and truth, as long as his conviction, his zeal and love for God was "as strong as death" and "all the waters could not extinguish his love and loyalty." But the time came when the prophetic truth lost for him its bright lustre in the narrow Ghetto enclosure and the hero of old was shorn of his strength by the thousand and one paragraphs of the Shulhan Aruk, so that he scarcely knew how to appreciate any longer his world-conquering truth for which he had undergone a thousandfold martyrdom. The Nazarite of old fell a prey to the Philistine. Modern culture sapped the strength of the faith that had withstood the onslaught of centuries.

Again God called the men of vision, the men of the spirit, the modern prophets, the Reform pioneers,

men without fear who, like Moses of yore, dared break the people's idols, the idolatry of blind letter and authority-worship in order that the spirit might again become manifest in Israel, men who like Elijah brought the fire down from heaven to make the people cry for the living God, men who breathed new life into the dry bones of Judaism to awaken a new faith and new self-consciounsess in the heart of the modern Jew. Let the Orthodox or the Nationalists in our midst deride as much as they please the Reform pioneers; they were giants in their generations. Theirs was the clear vision of the prophet and the resolution of the hero; they were with every inch men and with every fiber of their soul Jews, and they became, amidst the deluge of materialism and skepticism that threatened to carry off the bulwarks of the faith, the real saviors of Judaism. So in Germany, and so in America. And while those Reform pioneers that came from Germany and especially David Einhorn, with his prophetic genius, revitalized and regenerated the Synagogal life, filling the hearts and homes with new faith and hope and new self-respect as Jews, it was left to Isaac M. Wise to achieve the glorious work which was to safe-guard Israel's priceless heritage of the Torah for future generations. It was the great task of Americanizing Jew and Judaism that appeared to him as a vision on the very threshold of his career in the new land, and while concentrating his marvelous physical and mental powers upon this mighty endeavor, he became the great man of action, the heroic battler for the Jew's rights, for Judaism's

truth and for God's treasure in Israel's keeping, the Torah and for a sanctuary of learning. And behold his triumphant success! The very men who had fought and wrestled with him for years in loyalty to their own principles extended their hand of fellowship to him in the end to co-operate with him in the realization of his plan of rearing an institution of Jewish learning for American Israel in which they had failed. By his unique powers of pen and tongue, by incessant preaching and writing, by traveling throughout the length and breath of the land, by indefatigable and painstaking efforts to bring home to the people near and far the ideas and ideals of Judaism as humanity's everlasting truth and world-redeeming law of righteousness, he ploughed the soil and sowed the seeds finally to reap the golden harvest. Thus he succeeded in building up the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and crowning it with the founding of the College over which it was his good fortune to preside for a quarter of century until he reached by reason of his rare vigor the four-score of years. And as it is said of Moses, his eyes did not grow dim nor did his strength abate until God called him away from his work to the Yeshiba shel Maalah.

And now again I ask whence came to the prophets of old and to these modern champions of light and of progress the power to fulfill the arduous task they were called upon to accomplish? There can be but one answer: The divine idea that took possession of their soul, the conviction, the principle upon which they staked their life made them irresistible and

fearless. And whence did they derive their strength of conviction, their clear vision and firm principle? Their knowledge was deep as is the gold imbedded in the bowels of the earth and the precious pearl hidden in the depth of the sea, and so was their faith firm as a rock, unshaken by current views of fashion. There was no break in their system of thought. no discord in their philosophy of life, their *Weltanschauung*. Like the golden candlestick in the Tabernacle, they were of *one* piece; their knowledge and faith one.

More than ever before we need men of power and of the spirit in the pulpit to-day, men that lead and are not led by public opinion or by the desire for popularity; men of firm religious principles and not seekers after sensational novelties; in one word, God-fearing and not man-serving preachers.

So let the spirit of God and zeal for Israel's faith permeate your whole life while you are preparing yourselves for the sacred task of the rabbi which is to bring God and godliness home to each truth-seeking soul, and allow not the profane fire of a Zionism without God, the dazzling lights, the will o' wisps of popular fads and fancies lure you away from our spiritual heritage.

A king, says the Midrash, had a wise and loving servant who built a palatial residence for him, taking the finest marble blocks for it and having the royal name engraved on each with beautiful coloring, and when the king entered the gorgeous palace, he wondered and said: "How can I dwell here, while my servant who honored me here so grandly remains

outside? Let him come and abide with me as friend." So did God with Moses. He had worked with mind and heart, with every step and thought of his life for the glory of God, and so God called him "the faithful friend of His house." So did indeed all the great toilers for God and truth become sharers in His Kingdom. And among these Isaac M. Wise stands forth as a master-builder of this sanctuary of the Torah. So may every nook and corner of these halls of learning echo forth the cry to learners and teachers, to student and rabbi: "Be strong and of true courage, for thou art to lead the world out of the darkness of doubt and denial to the light of faith and of truth, and out of servitude to that freedom which is vouched to him who is a true servant of God." Amen.

6.

MOSES MIELZINER, OR UNCONSCIOUS GREATNESS.*

IT IS one of the precious characteristics of Judaism that not even its greatest of men could assume the attributes of Deity. We have no man-God nor God-man. The line of demarcation between God and man dares not be encroached upon by any person, however holy. Even a Moses is presented to us as a fallible and frail mortal with all the limitations and shortcomings of earth-born men. Only one feature of his life seemingly forms an exception to this rule. In the chapter (Exodus XXXIV) just read, we are told that, when coming down from the top of Mount Sinai where he had been in communion with God for forty days and forty nights, the skin of his face shone with such effulgence that the people were unable to look at him, and he had to cover his face with a veil. Let me say here in parenthesis that the well-known figure of Moses chiselled by Michael Angelo which has a horn-like protuberance emanating from his head is based upon the Vulgate translation of the Hebrew *Karan* which signifies a horn-like radiation—*facies cornuta*. The real meaning of the passage is that Moses' face

*Address at the Memorial Service held in honor of Moses Mielziner in 1904.

exhaled a sun-like radiance, the halo ascribed to celestial beings. We would say, there was a wondrous aureole around the brow of Moses manifesting the divine glory of the Shekinah reflected upon his countenance.

This superhuman feature, however, is at once turned into a trait of simple human greatness when we are further told: "And Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone—that is, he was not aware of this resplendent mark of the divine dignity which he bore on his countenance. He had no knowledge that God had put the stamp of superiority in this lustre of heavenly beings upon his brow. Only when he noticed that the people were struck with awe, as he stepped among them, and turned their eyes away, he modestly hid his face before them. What an exquisite picture of true, unconscious greatness! Let me take it as a fitting subject for contemplation, as we are eager to pay our tribute of loving regard and honor to the memory of Moses Mielziner, for many years the co-worker and afterwards for a couple of years, the successor of Dr. Wise at the Hebrew Union College, whose first anniversary of death we celebrate to-day.

Our rabbis, who always knew how to penetrate into the kernel of the Biblical truth, offer two different reasons for that luminous mark of divine glory upon the face of Moses. "Whence came this radiance to Moses?" they ask, and one answer points to that sublime moment in Moses' life when he stood in the cleft of the rock, while God's majesty passed by him,

and there fell a spark of the divine light upon him to illumine his face for all time. Another answer points to the moment when he, a mere mortal, took the tablets of the Law from the hands of the Most High to impart the everlasting words of truth and righteousness of heaven to the people on earth, and there the effulgent light flashed forth from his face ever to encircle it as a diadem of glory. There are two ways open for man to attain the highest realms of divine life and achieve the greatest triumphs. The one is to pursue truth as the loftiest ideal by having all faculties and energies of mind and soul bent upon learning and the acquisition of wisdom until heaven and earth, the world within and without, the past and the future, yield their secrets to him as sage or seer, and life in its totality becomes illumined with thought and purpose so as to reveal God's innermost nature to the soaring intellect. Of him the Scripture says: "Man's wisdom lighteth up his countenance." A man thus filled with wisdom cannot fail to impress us with his true greatness by the brightness which eradiates from his countenance. Look for instance at the picture of Moses Mendelssohn and observe how this rather unseemly face with its irregular features is lit up by the divine fire of genius and fascinates you by that serenity and calmness which betray both greatness of soul and sweetness of heart. Or go through the gallery of great thinkers and look at the statues of Socrates and Plato or at the portraits of such lofty minds as have in their solitude been in communion with God on high, and

you cannot fail to discern the halo of glory, the divine seal of magnificence upon their brow.

But alongside of these who shine in solitary glory like Moses in the cleft of the rock, there are the men of life-long labor in the service of mankind, the men that wrest the light of truth, the fire of righteousness and holiness from heaven and diffuse it among men on earth, the great teachers and benefactors of men, "the bestowers of wisdom that shine like the splendor of the firmament and those that lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and aye." They are less concerned with the accumulation of the highest wisdom and knowledge to satisfy the craving of their own soul than with the enriching of other minds and supplying the needs of their fellow-man. The divine goodness with which their hearts abound is mirrored upon their brow, and the grace of heaven rests upon their benign face to tell that they are the beloved of God as well as the lovers of men.

Now it seems to me that the beautiful features delineated in our text were, indeed, found in our never-to-be-forgotten Moses Mielziner who as colleague or teacher, and always as friend endeared himself to us and all who came into contact with him. Even before he came to America he showed, whether as teacher and rabbi in Copenhagen and New York, or as writer, all the virtues of a painstaking searcher after truth, the accuracy and thoroughness of an eminent Rabbinical scholar. And just because his New York friends, among whom I

will mention Einhorn, Adler and Huebsch, appreciated and admired the erudition and acumen of the fine Talmudic scholar who was so familiar with the whole household of Jewish lore as to be more worthy than any one else in America to be entrusted with the task of training young men for the Rabbinical career alongside of Dr. Wise at the Hebrew Union College, they induced him to accept the call to the Talmudic chair, and he proved, indeed, a mighty power of support and a pillar of strength to the College and its immortal founder.

But Moses Mielziner was more than a mere scholar. His was the soul of a lover of God and man. He was by nature not a fighter, neither for startling new truth to displace long cherished old, though antiquated, views, nor for radical Reform principles to demolish the traditional system based upon Talmudical law. Instead he loved to dive into the sea of the Talmud to bring to the light of day precious pearls of wisdom and hand them to his pupils for guidance and monition. Neither was he eager to put the literature and learning of the past into a new mould foreign to their main purpose, as some radical Reformers did. As the rabbis say of Moses that "he seized part of the tables and God held part of them, while there was space left between," so did Moses Mielziner ever exert a certain self-restraint, not taking too much into his grasp but rather to leave room for the old and the new to blend. Thus he became a skilful master of the Halakah to make it voice the living truth as required by the time. But

above all he was, like Moses of old, the meekest of men, and by his exceeding modesty and self-denial he won the warm affection and profound regard of pupils and fellow-workers as few did. And now behold his portrait as painted by his own son, Leo Mielziner! Does his serene and placid face not bear the stamp of inner greatness, of divine grace and glory? His was that greatness which, like that of Moses, comes from true humility. Even the greatness of the father of the prophets did not consist in his mighty intellectual grasp which comprised, as the rabbis tell us, forty-nine out of the fifty degrees of the divine wisdom. Neither the spirit which soared up to the ethereal realms of sublimest truth nor the matchless service he did to his people accorded to Moses the highest place in history. It was his personality which, while striving so high and working so intensely for the welfare of the people, sunk his own self altogether in the work he did and the cause he served. Truth was too lofty and the people's cause too dear and holy to him to consider his own self and his own merit in the work he achieved. Because Moses hid his face in humility when he first beheld God's majesty in the flaming bush—the rabbis say furthermore—he was crowned by God with that diadem of glory that the people stood in awe before him, seeing that radiance of divinity that marked his face. True greatness ever manifests itself in simplicity, in reverence before God and in humility before men. It was this Moses-like humility and meekness which made a Hillel and a Moses Mendelssohn influential

leaders and moulders of men. It is the secret of Abraham Lincoln's ever growing popularity among the American people. Meekness and modesty were also the pre-eminent traits of Moses Mielziner. He did not know himself what charm there was about what he spoke and what he taught, because of his unselfish devotion to his task as learner and as teacher.

Truly he should ever be held up by us as a pattern and model to be followed and emulated. Especially ought the students and graduates of the Hebrew Union College take the life and personality of Moses Mielziner home to themselves as a lesson for their career.

There is no denying the fact that humility, self-forgetting modesty is becoming one of the lost arts among the rabbis no less than among other men in their private or public life. Too often, popularity is sought by self-parading, while self-effacement in the great cause is seldom shown by our public men. Yet the people need most of all examples of meekness and humility in an age which, puffed up by reason, has unlearned how to bend the knee before God. It is a fatal error to ascribe greatness to mere intellectuality, especially so in the domain of religion whose deep emotional forces must make man aspire to God and to the highest ideals of life. Nor is true greatness won by good work alone, if the soul is not thrilled by the fervor of a disinterested service of God and man. Judaism wants all the avenues of knowledge opened for man to beckon him on to the highest realm of thought, and all the roads of human benef-

icence laid out to improve and elevate the conditions of men; but teacher and worker, seeker for truth and for human welfare must, like Moses, at the very top of his successful endeavors bend his face in reverential humility before the Most High in order that at life's completion the divine seal of approval upon his brow may test to this excellence of the work achieved. So may the memory of Moses Mielziner be to us a help and an inspiration, and a blessing forever. Amen.

7.

DAVID EINHORN AND SAMUEL ADLER.*

IT IS a delicate task that has devolved upon me as President of the Hebrew Union College and successor to its immortal founder, Isaac M. Wise, to speak on behalf of the College authorities and Cincinnati Jewry in honor of the memory of the Reform pioneers whose hundreth anniversary of birth the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has decided to celebrate this week. David Einhorn and Samuel Adler, the illustrious New York rabbis, two knights of the Jewish legion of immortals who often parried swords with the sainted Cincinnati leader. But I derive courage in doing so from the Rabbinical saying: "Where disciples of the wise enter into a combat on behalf of Israel's sacred heritage, they will ultimately arrive at a state of mutual appreciation and amity." These great warriors in the cause of God and truth have all entered into heaven's realm of peace, and the homage we pay to the one or the other is a tribute of gratitude and admiration to all the heroes whose life is an inspiration and a pattern to us, their heirs and disciples.

In commenting upon the words in our Weekly Portion spoken by Abraham: "The God of heaven

*Address at their Centenary Celebration, delivered at Temple Bene Israel, on Sabbath Parashath Toledoth, 1909, Cincinnati.

and the God of the earth," the rabbis say "Abraham's life task was to bring the Godhead believed to be enthroned only in the heaven above, down to the hearts of men on earth." This is, indeed, the whole idea underlying the Reform movement. It is the God within, the God of humanity that we want to bring home to our generation. Commonplace truth as this seems to be, we scarcely realize what price our heroic leaders had to pay for it, what trials and sufferings they had to undergo to win their generation for the real understanding of the spirit of our faith.

Cynics may tell the people that the mere desire for the things forbidden by the Mosaic law created the Reform movement in America. How little do they appreciate the inner struggles and heart-burnings each step from the Ghetto darkness to the light of the new day cost those lofty-minded pathfinders of Reform, and what bitter anguish and martyrdom they underwent for their conviction. Our sages of old fully appreciated the trials of a religious hero when they represented Abraham as having had to go through the fiery furnace of the tyrant Nimrod in order to have his faith tested, before he could go out preaching the Only One God, to a listening world. He had to be a brave, fearless idol-breaker challenging the wrathful ruler, before he could go forth in pursuit of his ideal and be an altar-builder to God on high. He had to encounter all the curses of a fanatic multitude, ere he could start out on his mission to be a blessing to all mankind. He had first to present his credentials as a man of firm principles and of high character before he could be revered by those

around him as a prophet and a "prince of God." Abraham was the prototype of the Jew.

What lent the Jew the wondrous power of endurance and resistance with which he braved fire and sword and a thousandfold death for the sake of his faith, but that glorious example offered him by the patriarch, of a passionate love for truth and of a steadfast belief in the God of heaven who shall one day be the God worshipped from one end of the earth to the other?

Still, these simple and sublime truths were lost sight of under the crushing weight of meaningless and soulless practices tenaciously adhered to by blind orthodoxy. In order, then, to emancipate the modern Jew from the thraldom of letter and authority worship and liberate the imprisoned kernel from the shell of dry legalism, the Reformer had to step forth boldly as an idol-breaker and incur the hatred, the curse and persecution of the fanatic. In order to restore the faith in God and in man in all its prophetic grandeur, he had to display the fearlessness, the fortitude and heroism of the martyr often only to be overcome, like Abraham, by a feeling of loneliness and forsakenness and find comfort and strength only in God who would appear to him in the night of perplexity and peril, saying: "Fear not! I am thy shield, and thy reward will be very great."

This is the story of all great Reform pioneers, as it was that of the prophets of old, all of whom felt that there was a fire burning within which they could not quench, a message God had planted into their heart which they could not withhold. But there are

few life-stories so full of pathos, of such tremendous and almost tragic earnestness as is that of David Einhorn. His life was a continuous martyrdom from the day when he who had been crowned with the Rabbinical diadem of the Torah in his seventeenth year, came back from the university, imbued with modern ideas, to be proscribed and persecuted by his own teachers at the Yeshibah of Fuerth as a heretic and infidel, to that terrible night of mob rule in Baltimore when he had to flee for his life, because he was singled out for assault as one of the most pronounced and intrepid Anti-Slavery men of the pulpit and the press. Like Abraham, he had to wander from land to land and from city to city, hunted by fanatics and despots because of his independence of mind and his courage of conviction. The friend of Abraham Geiger, the peer and successor of Samuel Holdheim, one of the most scholarly expounders of the Reform principles at the Rabbinical Conferences of Frankfort-on-Main and Breslau, he had hardly found a field of activity worthy of his brilliant capacities as chief rabbi of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, when Jewish and Lutheran orthodoxy conspired against him to undermine his position, because he had quite correctly declared that not the Abrahamitic rite but Jewish birth renders the Jew a Jew. And no sooner did he begin to preach the truth of Judaism to the radicals of the Reform Congregation at Budapest than the Government shut to him the gates of his temple at the instigation of the conservatives who denounced him as a revolutionary. And when at last he reached the goal

of his destination in our land of liberty, his ordeals were not yet at an end. He was branded by orthodox and reform rabbis alike as an enemy of Jew and Judaism and antagonized as an iconoclast.

They failed to understand him whom they so bitterly assailed. He was, indeed, an idol-breaker. He strove to end all hypocrisy in the pulpit and in the rabbis' private life. He wanted truth and not the semblance of truth. His was that fiery soul that could not brook compromise. Like Elijah on Mount Carmel he cried forth: "Choose between God and Baal, between Orthodoxy and Reform, but halt not between two opinions!" While the great master-builder of American Judaism, Isaac M. Wise, followed the maxim of the German state-builder: "First Unity and then Liberty," Einhorn stood unyieldingly by the principle: "First Truth and then Peace," and thus became the master-mind of Reform theology. Isaac M. Wise was the altar-builder of American Jewry throughout the west, the south and the north; David Einhorn the altar-builder of Reform Judaism, the principles of which found expression at the Philadelphia Conference and were afterwards embodied in the Union Prayer Book which is bone of his bone and spirit of his spirit. Einhorn invested the pulpit with new dignity and made it echo forth that American patriotism which stands for the highest ideals of humanity.

His limitation was that he remained German in speech and mode of thought. He stood on top holding aloft the staff of Reform, and the masses understood him not. Few know that on coming to New

York he also contemplated establishing a Hebrew College, and when afterwards he with several others in common with his friend Samuel Adler, secured funds for this purpose, it was not realized, and he withdrew. Providence chose Isaac M. Wise to be the builder of the Rabbinical school for progressive American Jewry. He had the full command of the people, and in accepting the Chairmanship of the Committee on the Course of Studies for the Hebrew Union College, Einhorn showed his perfect willingness to aid him in the great cause. Einhorn's last words from the pulpit at the time of his retirement was a blessing for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. "I am a Hebrew" was the text of his farewell sermon in which he summed up his eventful life, and all his colleagues throughout the land, west and east, Orthodox and Reformer, united in honoring him as a true "prince of God."

But how about Einhorn's friend and co-worker, Samuel Adler? The rabbis note that Scripture speaks of Moses and Aaron, at times mentioning Moses after Aaron and at other times before him, and they say: "This shows that before God they rank alike. Alongside of the man with that vehement passion for truth and justice, the unflinching insistence on right and the unrelenting castigation of wrongdoing, such as Moses was, the milder disposition of an Aaron with his calmer and more cautious mind is needed to encourage and aid the former when his spirit droops, and to win the people for his message. Einhorn and Adler, like Wise and Lilienthal, belonged together as the Aaron and Moses of American Re-

form. Samuel Adler, the scholar and conservative Reformer at the Conference of Brunswick and Frankfort-on-the-Main became the co-worker and ally of Einhorn as soon as he came to this country. Knowing and admiring the companion of his youth as the lofty-spirited champion, the knight without fear and without blemish whose sword was so sharp, yet so bright and clean from rust, he seconded him in every movement and promoted his endeavors exactly as did Dr. Lilienthal those of Dr. Wise. He published little, but what he wrote or spoke bore the stamp of profound thought, and his library which his children donated to the Hebrew Union College testifies to the wide range of his scholarly studies. Einhorn and Adler, entwined in their life, shall not be separated in the esteem of posterity in their death. They will live in American Jewry as long as Jewish fidelity, Jewish thinking and feeling will live and inspire us with love for, and loyalty to, our Jewish patrimony, a blessing and a benediction forever. Amen.

8.

SAMUEL HIRSCH.*

"The wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those that lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and aye." Daniel XII 3.

WHAT the azure blue is which fills the universe, linking star to star in the vast infinitude of space, modern science has as yet failed to discover. We only know that it is akin to the luminous orbs and impregnated with star-life. The stars themselves have yielded their secret to us. We know that they differ from our sun and its planetary system only in degree, not in kind; in quantity, not in quality of their life and life elements. But while yonder are so near and indispensable to us as to furnish us with the very essence of our life, others are so remote as to serve only the mariner and the astronomer as marks and guides in their calculations; and others again are at such a distance that they seem almost to merge in the ethereal element surrounding them. Such are the great men on the firmament of human history. Some move at such remote distances that the rays of light which emanated from them have penetrated our entire spirituality, while they themselves are scarcely distinguishable in their peculiar

*Memorial Address delivered at Temple Sinai, Chicago, May, 1889.

relation to us. Others shine like polar stars, like mighty finger-posts of Divine guidance, mapping out the road and the destination for us. But then there are those who shine like the sun and the moon on our path, forming sum and substance, permeating bone and marrow of our existence, the fashioners and leaders of our age.

Thus while speaking of our Reform pioneers, we gratefully acknowledge Samuel Hirsch to have been one of these luminous orbs, part of the solar constellation that brightened up our mental horizon and imbued us with new intellectual and spiritual life-force. He stands forth in unique splendor as one who dared, when still very young, to write a philosophy of Judaism after the prevailing system of Hegel, transforming the Mosaic and Talmudic tales and ordinances into allegories and symbols, and to present Israel s faith to the world as "the religion of humanity."

In order to form a just estimate of such Reform-Pioneers as were Geiger, Holdheim, Einhorn, Hirsch and others in Germany, we must guard against conferring upon them the claim of infallibility which they themselves have wrested for us from the authorities of old. We would sin against the very spirit of progress which made them leaders and prophets of their age, should we attempt to canonize their every word. We would, furthermore, do them injustice, were we to weigh all their utterances and opinions in the scale of modern research and by the standard of recent investigations. Truth grows, and many a thing which seemed true fifty years ago,

is no longer considered so to-day. Heaven and earth have been revolutionized since. Creation and Revelation have assumed altogether new aspects in the perspective of this Darwinian age of ours. Both religion and ethics present different and far more difficult problems than they did two generations ago. The catechisms of Einhorn and Holdheim, of Hirsch, Formstecher and Herxheimer, have served their day. Whether they dogmatize after Maimonidean fashion, or allegorize after the example of Philo, they start from premises which we no longer recognize as ours. Their rationalism and Geiger's criticism appear in some respects alike antiquated from our advanced point of view. In fact, our progress was rather one-sided. In order to make our religion the rallying power of many, and not of the few, we must lay more stress on the emotional and the practical side than on the mere intellectual and theoretical one, as has thus far been done. Like the boat on the water, so also has the vessel which carries man, two rudders to steer it forward; and like the bird, so does the soul-life require two wings to soar aloft, and these are mind and heart, well balanced and harmonized. The work of reform, then, is far from being completed. Judaism has to undergo many changes yet. But all the greater is our indebtedness to those men who have risen to the demands of their age, turning Judaism from stability and stagnation to progress and enlightenment, and elevating it from Orientalism and Ritualism to the ideal of a broad ethical and prophetical religion of humanity. Their providential task consisted in their having shown the world that

Israel is not a mere relic of the past, a curse-laden wanderer with the mark of sin on his care-furrowed brow; but, like Abraham, still a seed of great promise; that Judaism is not the desolate and forsaken daughter of Zion, but like Sarah still the princess among the religions of the world. Not a race-religion, the heirloom of a single Oriental tribe, but a light and a bond interlinking all the nations and sects; that its staff of life is not withered, but was only waiting for the spring-tide of modern civilization to burst forth into new buds and blossoms, and ripen new fruit to feed humanity thereon.

And, behold! Do these leaders of Reform not still shine aloft in solitary glory, pointing the way? Do they not still, like Moses with Aaron and Hur on his side, stand high upon the mountain-top holding up the banner of victory to cheer and to inspire us in the struggle for a religion purified, spiritualized and world-embracing; whereas the bulk, the great majority of Jews, still grope in the darkness of fear and superstition, of letter-worship and authority-belief, while others wallow in the mire of materialism and sensualism, forgetful of their obligations to the past and to the glorious future of mankind?

Yet, while each of these great pioneers of Reform shines with a peculiar light of his own, each having advanced some new idea which formed a foundation stone in the structure of modern Judaism, Samuel Hirsch deserves special credit for a virtue so rare among the pulpit-men of all denominations, and which made him, like Einhorn, the target of fanatical orthodoxy and the threat and terror of the time-serving

hypocrite, for his intellectual honesty and independence. Both Einhorn and Hirsch emancipated American Judaism from the thraldom of ritualistic hypocrisy and deceit, thereby raising it in the respect of the world as well as in self-esteem. But while Einhorn spent his main force in this glorious battle until it resulted in a complete victory, and he died with a prayer for the success of the Sunday service upon his lips, Samuel Hirsch actually introduced the Sunday service in his Congregation in Philadelphia, and he remained aggressive and grew in boldness and outspoken radicalism as he advanced in years, so that it seemed as if the prophetic mantle of Samuel Holdheim of Germany had fallen upon him in America. Having been of that unbending cast of mind, of that rigid, unyielding intellectualism which would not shrink from turning the whole Mosaic law, with its legendary poetry and its priestly ritualism into one great symbolic lesson of labor, one system of instruction to work and to improve matter and mind on earth, he made the Sabbath the corner-stone of that religion of toiling humanity, insisting all the more upon the observance of the Sunday as the common day of rest for all. He thus became on this free virgin soil of America the most uncompromising advocate of this most radical of all reform measures—the transfer of the historical Sabbath to Sunday.

Both nature and history advance slowly and surely, not by leaps and destructive storms. I trust, I am personally too long and too intimately connected with the Sunday movement in this, my still beloved former congregation and in the country at large, to

be misunderstood if I venture to say that the prophetical hope for the time when all flesh will bow before God on one and the same Sabbath will and must necessarily ripen but slowly and gradually. But this I will say: When Progressive Judaism in America will once have united upon declaring before the world: "Better the public Sabbath day kept in earnest than to have a sham Sabbath clung to in name, but violated in fact!" then the name of Samuel Hirsch will stand out in bold relief in the future history of Judaism, as he ventured to stand out in every Conference and Synod in which he took part for the last fifty years.

It almost seems fore-ordained that the mortal frame, as well as the immortal fame of Samuel Hirsch, should remain in the safe keeping of the Chicago Sinai Congregation and its distinguished leader, his own son.

So let us honor the conscientious and profound scholar, the zealous defender of the cause of Judaism and humanity, the noble-hearted and untiring worker in the field of education and religion, of charity and philanthropy, the honest and stalwart soldier in the army of progress and of enlightenment by not simply placing him on mere partisan lines. Samuel Hirsch's loyalty and devotion to our priceless ancestral heirloom; his labors on behalf of religious instruction and of true beneficence, will secure him a high rank in the history of modern Israel and will forever redound to the glory of American Judaism and the Jewish pulpit. His hands were held up to bless, his heart remained faithful to the cause of God and

of Israel, and his head clear and bright in eagerness to disclose the grandeur of Judaism, until his life's sun set, henceforth to shed its bright radiance from a serener realm of blessedness.

And we can in no better, nor more befitting manner honor his memory than by working in the same spirit and with the same loyalty to our conviction, following the dictates of our own conscience and obeying the demands of our age and surrounding conditions in unbroken continuity with our great past and in consonance with the claims and prospects of our glorious future.

Of the ancient prophet Samuel we read that his spirit was called up from the dead only to cast an all the more glaring light of contrast upon a degenerate age. We desire to have the spirit of Samuel Hirsch to work with us as a living force serving us as landmark and finger-post in the progress of Judaism, in the advance of humanity, in the unfolding of all that is divine in man and humanity. Russian folklore tells of heroes who could not die before having imbued their successors with their last breath in order to equip them with the strength enabling them to emulate their prowess and fill the world with their fame. Thus let us imbibe the last breath of our great leaders and prophetic heroes to feel the glow of their enthusiasm and love for all that is holy to mankind and precious in the eyes of God, that they may shine for us and for coming generations "like the brightness of the firmament and like the stars forever and aye." Amen.

9.

ABRAHAM GEIGER.*

THE MASTER BUILDER OF MODERN JUDAISM.

SURELY the Lord God will do nothing unless He revealeth His secret to His servants, the prophets." Often the question is asked whether the *age* creates the *man* who imprints his name and character upon an epoch, or the *man* the *age* that stands for certain ideas and ideals. The fact is, that Providence so welds the collective and the individual forces together as to make them work out its own plans and purposes, and so does the genius reveal the secrets of God. In Abraham Geiger, Judaism reached a new stage of its existence. He broke the spell of centuries and spoke the liberating word which imbued it with new life and vigor, with new self-consciousness and self-confidence. He was the prophet to whom God revealed the secret of the age for modern Israel. He was its genius of rejuvenation and became the spiritual regenerator of Judaism and the Jew. He gave the reform movement its scientific basis, its historical foundation, and thus became the master-builder of modern Judaism. Before the torch-light of his keen research and the brightness of his vision, the dark recesses of Jewish

*Centenary Address, May 28th, 1910.

history were lit up, and order and harmony entered the chaos of Jewish thought. For him Judaism spelt progress and development, and therein he found the key to unlock the mysteries of the past, and at the same time the magic power wherewith to revitalize the Law, and the faith of Israel that seemed to be on the decline. Not only, then, as the first and foremost champion of Reform pioneers does Abraham Geiger claim our homage on this Sabbath, on the Sabbath following the hundredth anniversary of his birth, but as the great creative genius, as the historical refashioner and rebuilder of Judaism, and it behooves particularly the Hebrew Union College, upon whose banner *American Reform Judaism* is inscribed, to solemnly celebrate his centenary.

There are many in these days who say: Religion should come as a heavenly message of peace, fostering love and good-will among men, and not as a theology which engenders strife and division, especially at a time when the Jew must show a united front against his aggressors. They who speak thus from pulpit and platform, through the press and from among the people, fail to realize that Israel's God is a God of truth, who can not be bribed by gifts or works of philanthropy; that Israel's creed Shema Yisrael! is the battle-cry of heroes who fought, bled and died for the truth as it lived in their innermost conviction, and that the same fire which burned in an Elijah, an Amos and an Isaiah created both the martyrs and the sages of the middle age who also gave their life and all for their faith, and the

Reformers of our own day, whose life was one of continuous trial and peril and martyrdom, like that of the prophets of old.

Of all those brave battlers for spiritual freedom and intellectual honesty Geiger, was the first to encounter the hatred, the anathema and the persecution of orthodoxy. But what made him great was not so much the war-cry he raised against hypocrisy and hollow formalism, nor the battle array he formed in marshaling all the forces of Reform, nor even the reforms he introduced and proposed, which, after all, remained but half-measures compared with what his fellow-champions and particularly the American Reform pioneers did. Geiger's real and lasting greatness consisted in that, while he laid bare the sore wounds which showed Judaism to be in a perilous state, he as a true diagnostician pointed out both the cause of the disease and the method of its cure. He felt the pulse-beat, heard the heart-throbs beneath all the formations and transformations and even the deformations, and, like Elijah, declared to the despairing mother: Behold, thy child liveth!

He was not, as Prof. Adler said the other day, a mere critic who stopped at the negation of the old. He was most positive in his assertion that Judaism, when purified of its dross and cleared of its debris, was sure to win the world for its truth, as humanity's faith. His was a *constructive* mind, and as a historian of great divinatory power, he knew how to penetrate into the deeper forces of religious and social life and trace their origin and growth. He voiced the threefold message of the age for the Jew: *Evolution, Regeneration and Historic Continuity.*

This was far more than the *emancipation* wrought by Moses Mendelssohn and the *renaissance* effected by Leopold Zunz.

Mendelssohn led modern Israel out of the house of Egyptian bondage, but his land of promise offered no spiritual freedom. Belonging to the school of cosmopolitan deists, he lacked the historical sense, the insight into the laws of human progress, and hence, like Maimonides, he believed in the immutability of the whole Mosaic system of laws and ceremonies. Yet when his shallow rationalism was swept away by the "Critik der reinen Vernunft" of Immanuel Kant, the Robespierre of the Mental Revolution, as he was called, and the inrushing tide of the new culture carried the Ghetto Jew, bewildered and dazed, out into the maelstrom of a humanity that knew of no bounds nor barriers, all hope of Judaism seemed gone; and apostasy and assimilation became the watchword of the enlightened.

The American painter, Sargent, in his famous, though unhistorical, fresco of Moses and the Prophets in the Boston Library, portrays the Hebrew lawgiver as a grand, imposing figure, yet immovable as a rock. Such was indeed the traditional concept of the Mosaic Law. It was believed to have come forth out of the mouth of God on Mount Sinai all finished in its dual character, written and oral, fixed and unchangeable for all time. Altered conditions could at best suspend, but never abolish or alter one iota. Was it possible, then, that this four thousand years' structure should fall before the furious storm that ushered in the new era, without burying all the faithful beneath its ruins?

It was a well-meant and laudable endeavor on the part of the early reformers, such as Israel Jacobson, Solomon and Kley, to check the growing tide by removing the repulsive features of the old synagog and putting the venerable matron in a more attractive attire borrowed from the church, by introducing innovations such as confirmation, the organ and choir, and the sermon in the vernacular. But such aesthetic reforms could not conceal from the thinking Jew the inner discord. The pillars of the faith were tottering and tumbling; the whole Law, Mosaic or Rabbinical, the Sabbath, the Dietary and Purity laws were broken and set aside. Could moralizing sermons after Protestant fashion without a spark of Jewish sentiment and thought, of which also Zunz published a volume of little depth, heal the breach between life and the Law, between theory and practice?

In this deluge of destruction Zunz stepped to the fore, another Noah with his ark. "Let us build up," he cried, "die Wissenschaft, the scientific lore of Judaism, and we shall not perish in the flood." His crew, the members of the Juedische Kulturverein he had formed, were overtaken by the flood, but he, the boatman, remained true to his "grossmuethige Grille," as Heine says, and he became the regenerator of Jewish literature, he in common with his three compeers, Krochmal, Rappaport and Luzzatto. With his stupendous learning and wondrous mastership he cut a path through the impenetrable forest of a three thousand years' literature, and revealed to the astonished world order, system and growth, where all seemed but confusion and stagnation. Especially

did his master-work, "Die Gottesdienstliche Vortraege, of 1832, impress the learned youth, as Geiger writes, "like a mighty fructifying torrent falling upon a parched soil to stimulate everywhere new thought and new effort." Still, the great pathfinder fell short of the expectations he had aroused. He failed to touch the deeper forces and light up the inner process of Judaism. As the majestic river Rhine is lost in the sand of the Dutch lowlands, so were Zunz's gigantic efforts lost in a dry-as-dust erudition which registered names and dates, and was, as Geiger writes, concerned more with dead formulas and tombstone inscriptions than with the living faith of living Israel. Buried among dust-covered folios, he lost hold of life, and life of him. He became embittered, a hater of the Reform he had espoused, and a vilifier of Reformers, an advocate of obsolete rites and practices he himself had discarded, despite the fact that he assigned to the books of Moses a post-exilic origin far beyond that of the most radical critics. He became a Baal Teshubah, a retrogressionist, and, as Geiger's scathing review of his later work, "Zur Geschichte und Literatur," points out, a Nationalist.

For the great work of Israel's religious emancipation from the thraldom of blind letter and authority-worship and the rebuilding of Judaism upon the solid ground work of modern thought and modern research, Providence had singled out a man of a different cast of mind, a man fully abreast of the achievements and aims, the ideas and ideals of the age, and filled with an unquenchable thirst for truth and for righteous-

ness. This man was *Abraham Geiger*. The community of Frankfort, his native town, was, as in fact it still is, rent asunder by two factions, the men of the Philanthropine and the men of the Klause, radicals who sneered and scoffed, and fanatics and blind followers who bewailed and deplored the new state of things. Young Geiger stood and moved between these two extremes. His father and first teacher was an old-fashioned orthodox rabbi who died after he had reached his 14th year. But Providence would have him come under the influence of Wolf Heidenheim, the fine grammarian and text-critic, for his Bible studies, and of his own older brother, Solomon Geiger for the study of the Mishnah, which he learned to read independently of the Gemarah. Thus he at once acquired a *historical* and *critical* method. At the same time access to the secular, the historical and classical literature awakened in the precocious youth doubt, which is the beginning of independent thought. The universities of Heidelberg and Bonn, whither his liberal friends urged him to go in preparation for his rabbinical career, failed to offer him what he was greatly in search of, a clear system of thought, or *Weltanschaung*, in harmony with his aspirations as Jewish theologian. With all the greater delight he devoted his energies to the study of the Semitic languages, the Arabic and the Syriac, by the mastery of which he was enabled to unlock the hidden treasures of Jewish, Mohammedan and early Church lore, and to achieve undreamt-of triumphs in the field of religion and philosophy, as well as philology. The prize he won as a student of 22 years

by his essay on "What Has Mohammed Drawn from Judaism?" at once manifested the wide grasp of his intellect, while at the same time it directed his efforts toward a broad historical survey of what Judaism accomplished as mother of the two world-religions and of many systems of philosophy, old and new. With his mental horizon thus enlarged, the former Bible and Talmud student beheld the teachings of the synagog, the church and the mosque, the Scriptures and their interpretations, in the light of historical research as a continuous process of growth and development. He had thus become a true son of the *nineteenth century* which endowed man with a *new* sense, the sense of *historical analysis* and historical perception. Just as before the scrutinizing gaze of the geologist, Mother Earth had to lay bare her layers of rock to give account of the various geological periods she had to go through during the millions of years of her existence, so were the laws, the languages and the literatures of the nations, old or young, examined one after the other as to their kinship, growth and origin, to offer a deeper insight into the work-shop of the human mind and elucidate the laws governing all social, intellectual and spiritual life. Could Judaism have been exempt from the law of evolution and growth?

To this painstaking research of a lifetime Geiger consecrated his ingenious powers as historian and theologian. With fine critical acumen he learned to distinguish in the Mosaic Law and Biblical legend, in the Exilic and Post-exilic literature, in the Mishnaic, the Midrashic and Targumic and parallel

groups of Halakic and Haggadic interpretations of Scripture different currents and forces, different powers and potencies of religious life struggling for the dominion, each source representing another stratum in the composition and formation of the whole: the nomadic and the agricultural, the Israelitic and the Judaic period, prophet and priest, exilic and post-exilic life, each having left its imprint upon the Mosaic code, because beneath the dead letter there had been surging and struggling life. Particularly was Talmudic Judaism, thus long denounced and condemned alike by the world, the enlightened modern Jew and the Christian theologian, brought out by him in an altogether new light. He rolled off the shame, the curse and the doom placed by the New Testament upon the Pharisee, showing him to have been animated by the principle of religious democracy, which was to revitalize the Law and invest Jewish life with new sanctity. In opposition to the presumptuous claim of the Sadducean priesthood, Pharisaism insisted upon the priestly holiness of all Israel and upon its possessorship and guardianship of the Law, and, in order to justify this title, it created the various rites and ceremonies intended to sanctify the daily life of the Jew at every step. Not hypocrisy, but the hallowing of life was the object of rabbinism in its creative state, this was the revolutionizing viewpoint of Geiger. His master-work, "Die Urschrift und ihre Uebersetzungen," in the year 1857, came like a new revelation. It presented the proof that the Torah, the written and the oral Law, far from having remained intact and

unaltered throughout the centuries, had undergone change and transformation, both as to the letter and the interpretation of the same. Because the Bible, the Book of the Law, was to be the Law of Life, the educator and fashioner of the people, it had to be refashioned and remodeled ever anew in conformity with the prevailing and ever-advancing views concerning God and man.

It can not be my purpose here to explain in detail Geiger's views of the Sadducees and Pharisees and of their relations to the Samaritans and Karaites, or of the Mishnaic and Pre-Mishnaic systems of the Halakah, by which he revolutionized the entire history of Judaism. Let me only state that, while they were rejected and ridiculed by his opponents, chiefly of the Breslau school, Schechter's Genizah find of Ben Sira confirmed Geiger's theory regarding the rule of the *Sons of Zaddok* during the Second Temple; Harkavy's find of Anan's Sefer Ha Mizwoth confirmed Geiger's statement of the relationship between the Sadducees and the Karaites, and Halevy's find of a work by the Falashas on the Sabbath confirmed Geiger's explanation of Shebuth as a rigid Sabbath prohibition of the old Halakah, with the penalty of death upon its transgression.

So were all the Jewish rites, festivals and institutions shown by Geiger's critical and historical investigations to have undergone a continuous alteration and transformation. They had to be changed, because life changed. Neither could the views and doctrines concerning God and man, Israel and humanity remain the same, because the world-view never remained the same.

Here, then, was given for all time the basis for *reform*, for a reform from *within*, not from *without*, and that is *Regeneration* and *Rejuvenation*. As the earth becomes young at each turn of the year when the genial sun of spring beckons the hidden seeds of the soil to burst forth into beautiful verdure and luxuriant growth, where winter's frost had caused isolation and barrenness before; as the tree covers itself anew with green foliage and produces sweet fruitage, after the storm and the tempest have cast off the dried leaves and the withered branches; so Judaism. It is a living tree, a vital truth, and when the storm of destruction carries off the lifeless forms, all the dead wood that hinders its fresh growth, it means new life and greater expansion. Then it behooves the true guardian to separate the precious from the worthless, the essential from the transient, the kernel from the shell, the gold from the dross, in order to bring out to greater efficiency and potency the eternal truth, the vitalizing forces of Judaism. For this very crisis of the time is to cause Judaism to enter upon a new stage greater than the stage of either Rabbinism or that of Sadducean Mosaism was, a stage on which with its lofty world-conquering truths it is destined to wield still greater power and influence on a larger humanity bent, with all its intellectual and social powers, to free itself from the trammels of church dogma and the burden of a soulless ceremonialism. Away, then with the excrescences and deformities of Ghetto life! Away with all the laws and the practices that disgrace Judaism, disfigure the Jew and degrade the Jewess! Away with

Oriental barbarism, with the hollowness of formalism, with hypocrisy of official rabbidom! Thus sounded the war-tocsin, the battle-cry of the 25-year-old rabbi of Wiesbaden, as he rallied the foremost scholars and liberal rabbis around him in his "Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Juedische Theologie," and his call to Breslau two years afterward, with the Tiktin controversy that ensued, made him the central figure of the whole Reform movement in Germany.

But while waging war for continuous progress and absolutely free research, he accentuated on every occasion the principle of *historical continuity*. He believed in *evolution*, not in *revolution*; he wanted a wholesome growth, of the whole, not a breaking away to injure the development, not a secession and isolation. He insisted on his title as rabbi instead of Reform preacher; he would not be leader of a pronounced Reform temple, nor of a Sunday-Sabbath congregation. He loved Holdheim for his outspokenness and sincerity, and preached the funeral sermon over him, but neither endorsed his radical views, nor accepted the position vacated by his death. Instead of being a Christianizer, as the Reformers are called by the retrogressionists, Geiger was the most persistent, the most outspoken and the most dreaded antagonist of official Christianity. He opposed the Sunday-Sabbath as a concession to the Church. No one contested the right of the Church to claim for herself the title and privilege of the new and higher truth as forcefully as he did. No one challenged the authorities of Christendom to verify its presumptuous assertions concerning the inferior-

ity of Judaism in bolder language than he. To him Judaism was not *a* truth, but *the* truth, not a system of dead beliefs and practices, but spiritual life, ever unfolding and expanding, ever progressing and advancing, until its essence has permeated humanity in realization of the Messianic ideal, a process of development ever moved on by the spirit of history, the divine spirit ruling man in the various ages. Denouncing the narrow spirit of theological seminaries, which set dams and bars to free inquiry, and especially the intellectual dishonesty and the indulgence in casuistry such as prevailed in the Breslau school, he gave utterance to the following striking remark: "A religion of the minority which must rely solely on its own strength to be of power and influence, can maintain itself only when keeping itself on the very heights of mental and spiritual life, forming the vanguard in the battle of the intellect, and strong enough by its intrinsic solidity, its true inwardness and perfect freedom of thought to wrest recognition from the world around." "Only an institution of Jewish learning that remains in touch with the university spirit of free research, can truly promote and embody Jewish thought."

Judaism, he says, on another occasion, is not a tragedy, a thing to weep over. Even the tragic middle ages enclosed a great idea modern time has to unfold. The great drama of history is not closed. Only the last act can tell, and we live and hope and wait. The joy of optimism must be echoed forth in the synagog and the home of the Jew.

Such were the views of Geiger, who lives in all that modern Judaism, *Reform* or *Conservative*, has

accomplished ever since. Without Geiger neither Frankel nor Graetz could have done what they did. Nor did Geiger overlook the needs of a revival of *domestic devotion* in the Jewish home; a *revival*, not a resurrection of the dead, he wanted. Time forbids me to dwell on what he did as preacher—and a powerful preacher he was—or as practical reformer, as historian and critic, or as translator of the medieval poets—and a fine classical style he had as writer—whether in Hebrew or in German—or finally as theologian at the Berlin Hochschule. In fertility and richness of mind, in scientific depth and accuracy, in range of knowledge and mental grasp, as well as indefatigable industry, he had no equal, unless you go back to Maimonides as his peer. There was no field of Jewish literature and thought which he did not enrich, enlarge and deepen. His works are an inexhaustible mine of knowledge and of suggestiveness to the student. As it is said of Moses, his eyes became not dim, and his freshness of mind did not abate. His enthusiasm and zeal for Judaism's truth kept him young, until death lulled the great worker to sleep in his 64th year. And greater than the scholar, the writer and preacher was the man, the kindliest, the most lovable and most genial personality; his mind bright as steel, his heart of the purest gold.

When the Pharaonic edict had gone out condemning the Hebrew youth to die in the water, the precious life of the infant Moses was saved by Pharaoh's own daughter, who took him out of the ark of bulrushes floating on the water and placed him

under her fostering care; but there stood the sister of Moses ready to call Jochebed in order to nurture the future law-giver of Israel with the milk of the Jewish mother. So did Abraham Geiger call the spirit of Jewish history to impart the nutritious essence of Jewish life and Jewish thought and Jewish consciousness to Reform, in order to render it a true saving power for modern Judaism.

"Let them who antagonize me curse; Thou, O God, wilt bless," Geiger said, and he became a blessing, a source of light and of inspiration to many. May his spirit, his example and his life-work ever inspire us in our work for the cause of God, of Israel and humanity! Amen.

10.

THE PEACE MISSION OF JUDAISM.*

"GREAT peace have they that love Thy law, O God, and there is no stumbling unto them." These words of the Psalmist I offer as a greeting at the formal opening of the Hebrew Union College. There is a remarkable passage found in the Midrash Tanhuma with reference to this verse. "God's covenant with heaven and earth rests upon the preservation of the Torah in Israel. And so twelve years previous to the destruction of the Holy City by Nebuchadnezzar, God sent heroic men of the law in the company of King Jekoniah to Babylonia as pioneers, that they might there lay the foundations of the two great Academies, which were to remain intact for all the centuries amidst all the hostilities of war, of persecution and captivity, so as to be the central seats of the Torah, abodes of the Shekinah until the very beginning of the Messianic time. Yea, even the last great war that precedes the advent of the Messiah should not hurt nor affect them. No stumbling will come to their peaceful occupation."—This providential task, this glorious privilege claimed here for the Babylonian academies we proudly claim for our American institutions of learning.

*Address delivered at the re-opening of the College, September, 1914.

Throughout Europe and Asia there rages since months a world-war of unprecedented fury and savagery. The seminaries of Berlin, Breslau, Vienna and Budapest and the Yeshiboth of Russia and Galicia, I understand, are closed, because teachers and students are for the most part engaged in the cruel fight of the nations and races against each other. Our blessed land of freedom has, thanks to the Most High, been spared, and our schools and colleges continue undisturbed their educational pursuits. So do we, under the divine guidance, open our dear institution under the most favorable auspices for the sacred work of the year. O, what a great incentive for us! What a great responsibility to see to it that —as is said in the passage quoted with regard to the Babylonian academies—"the study of the Torah may not be neglected in our land."

But, dear Colleagues and Students, there is a deeper truth conveyed to us by the Psalm verse selected. Behold, all the classes and circles of society, the industrial and commercial and social and political world is everywhere disturbed and shaken up to the core by this terrible war, whereas a benign Providence has assigned to us a vocation of peace. "The disciples of the Torah," our sages say, "are entrusted with the task of strengthening the forces of peace in the world. For we read: 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and then great shall be the peace of thy children' "—of those who are to build up the world's welfare by their idealism, their spiritual endeavors.

You hear and read so much in these days of the Peace Mission of Judaism, and, indeed, I could,

and so could you, quote many Scriptural or Talmudic passages to verify this claim. But have you really considered what this peace mission means and implies? Can it mean that we as Jews should simply point to the familiar Messianic prophecy of Isaiah announcing in inimitable classic sentences the time of universal peace when "the nations will learn war no more" and "wolf and lamb will dwell together in concord," and for the rest shrink, or encourage our brethren to shrink, from participating as patriots in the battles fought by the nations in whose lands they live, for the honor and greatness of their country in the light in which they see it? Why, look at Abraham our ancestor! He fought nobly for his country when it was assailed by the northern foe, displaying valor and generosity in carrying away booty and giving it back to the king of Sodom. And this example of patriotic heroism was followed by the Jew everywhere, not merely in Palestine, the land he owned, but no less so in Babylonia, where at the time of Rab and Samuel, Jew stood against Jew siding with one dynasty or the other; and their loyalty to either was recognized by those very masters of Jewish lore. And so throughout history in every land in which he lived, the Jew won laurels for bravery as soldier and patriot. Whether in the old hemisphere or in the new, whether under a liberal or a despotic government, he stood in the front rank of those who battled heroically for the country to which he owed allegiance. And to-day even the Zionist, I am told, feels the throbbing of the heart for the land of his birth and culture, and proudly offers his service to fight or to die for its flag, be it

that of Germany and Austria or that of Russia, France and England. Yet who dares withhold the tribute of admiration from the Jew for such display of loyalty in these trying days, or lessen the patriotic ardor in the one or the other fellow-Jew?

Not in the political field or direction lies the peace-mission of the Jew. What then is the peace-mission of Judaism? When the Lord appeared to Israel on Sinai amidst thunder and lightning and earthquake, the Midrash tells, the nations were in fear, lest another deluge of water or fire was to come and sink the earth back into chaos; but when they heard the words of the Decalogue ring forth in seventy languages, they exclaimed: "The Lord is endowing His people with power; He blesses them with the instrument of peace." The Torah is the world's instrument of peace. Let us see how! "God maketh peace in His heavenly heights"—This is explained by the rabbis as follows: There are the angelic powers, the elements of fire and water, the forces of light and darkness, of growth and decay, of life and death in perpetual conflict with one another, but God establishes peace among them by bringing them into harmonious relations to each other. Man, too, composed as he is of heavenly and earthly elements, of upward and downward striving forces, must know how to establish harmony and peace among them. When man was to emanate from the hands of the great Creator, we are told, there was dissension in the angelic council. Love and Kindness favored the plan, saying: "Create him, O Master of the World, for he is kind and merciful." But the spirit of Truth said: "No, he is

full of lying and falsehood." Likewise the spirit of Peace said: "No, create him not, he is full of quarreling and strife." Then God seized Truth and cast it down to the earth, exclaiming: "Let Truth grow forth from the earth ascending ever higher and higher, while Righteousness looketh down from heaven. So will Kindness and Truth meet, Righteousness and Peace blend—in man." Here you have the function of peace assigned to the law. The beast in man must be subordinated to the divine. The lower passions must be put under the control of the higher aspirations of the soul. Truth, Justice and Peace belong inseparably together. Without truth and justice there can be no real peace.

When, 1900 years ago, Christianity entered the world with the proclamation of peace and good-will to men on earth through the advent of its "Prince of Peace," it was bound to fail, because it did not provide for truth and justice as the firm foundations of peace. The truth of monotheism had at the very beginning, as the most recent researches show, to enter a compromise with polytheism. Justice was frustrated by such doctrines as "Resist not evil!" and "If one smite thee on the right cheek, offer him also the other!" Peace was made with heaven by the surrender of the earth to the worldly powers, and thus Christianity became a religion of other-worldliness. Instead of uniting mankind, it divided it into hostile sects, into such as would be saved and such as are forever doomed. Hence love was turned into hatred, and, instead of peace, strife, warfare and persecution became the ruling passion of the centuries. Now, when at last the medieval spirit was exhausted and the

modern era brought about a reaction and new conditions of life, the pendulum swung from one extreme to the other. Other-worldliness made room for mere worldliness, illusive idealism for gross materialism, religious fanaticism for one-sided intellectualism, and Church discipline for unbridled individualism. And here you have the very root of all the evils from which our so-called enlightened age labors, and which have found their terrible culmination in this world-conflagration, the breakdown of our much boasted civilization. For it is the passion for wealth, for industrial and commercial aggrandizement that has engendered and fanned all the jealousy, hatred and strife existing between the classes and masses, between the nations and races. And on the other hand, it is the false culture-ideal, the overweening pride of intellectualism which has created new codes of ethics for the superman, new rules of conduct for the would-be superior races, and has sown the seeds of discord and prejudice everywhere among men, so as to make them cast the fear of God and the love for fellowman to the winds. Notwithstanding all the wondrous achievements of science and industry working for the ever closer union and brotherhood of man, we see to-day but the fiercest passions and furies of the beast rage, and despite all theoretical or practical altruism, man is further away than ever from his brother-man. Whence, then, shall come the real, the lasting peace to grieving humanity? This is the great concern of us all.

Now, it is not mere phraseology nor mere self-delusion, if I say that this great crisis in the history of mankind is the great opportunity for Judaism, if

we would but realize it and courageously step forth to point out to an anxious world the path of peace. The world is in need of new valuations, new standards, new ideals of life; and none can offer them with greater power and authority than he who can draw from the rich storehouse of Jewish lore and wisdom. Ever since we have ceased to be a political nation, if not long before, Judaism lost its annals of war, pointing to the schoolhouse as the true armory for its battles and for its ammunition. The hand that is stained with blood, David was told, can not build the temple of God, whose name is Peace. Iron, the weapon of destruction, must not rear an altar to the God of life and happiness, the law declares.

The sword was given to Esau to live by; Israel's watchword is: "Not by numerical strength and physical might, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Our warfare is that of the spirit, and our sword, the God of truth. Religion for the Jew is not an insurance policy for the world to come, but the hallowing of this world, of the whole of life here. Nor is it a contempt for, or mistrust of, reason and free research, but a harmonious blending of mind and heart-culture, peace between faith and free-thought. Again, its practical aim is not condescending charity, love at the expense of justice, nor generous altruism, which implies nobility on the one side and humiliation on the other, but mutualistic righteousness, the interdependence of rich and poor, of high and low upon the basis of true fellowship, of universal justice. Neither does Judaism set up creed or color or race as barrier between man and man; but, beginning with the first man and pointing to the united family

of man as the end, it wants to have all men, nations, classes and creeds united in the one covenant of peace, of which the rainbow in the clouds after the flood is the symbol, betokening a new heaven and a new earth for humanity. Each day, therefore, the Jew prays for the speedy establishment of the Kingdom of God, not in heaven, but on earth, and at the beginning of each year his prayers go forth to the throne of the heavenly Father, not for the Jew alone but for the bond of the brotherhood of man. This is the peace doctrine, this is the peace mission of the Jew.

Yet, in order to be able to fulfill this mission of peace, in order successfully to offer the world the new valuations, the new standards, the new ideals of life demanded these days, the Jew must undergo a great transformation himself. In this age of rationalism he must again become a pattern of reverential piety and render holiness his ideal of life. Amidst the pursuits of wealth, amidst the materialistic tendencies of the time he must again become the banner-bearer of idealism, and verify by this life the claim that the spirit of prophet and sage and martyr still lives in him; that he embodies, indeed, the kingdom of priests and the holy nation for which he was chosen by Providence. Then only can he influence the world, if, while living in and for the world, God, whose herald he claims to be, again becomes the hallowing force of his life.

Whence shall this new spirit come to the Jew, whence the belief in his great world-mission, whence the love and zeal for this mighty religious task with which Israel has been entrusted for all the ages, if

not from the pulpit, if not from the rabbi, the Jewish preacher? The Jewish teacher and leader must be aglow with faith in the God he preaches, in the mission he proclaims. He must burn with enthusiasm and love, with zeal and devotion for the sublime, yet simple truth he is to utter, or else he can not inspire others with faith and true idealism. Unless his own life is adorned with the beauty of holiness, how should he be able to beautify and hallow the life of others? The man in the pulpit must be a man of power of mind and heart, of firmness in faith.

And here comes the important lesson, the powerful monition to you, dear students who prepare for the Jewish ministry. We are all in our theological studies to-day under the influence of historical and critical research, which appeals exclusively to reason and offers so little for the nurture of the soul, the emotional and spiritual side. Just in the very years when the young mind, in its struggle for independence, is open to skepticism, teachings and books are brought to the knowledge of the student that tend to unsettle his inherited faith and to bring to him disillusion, disappointment and doubt; and there is comparatively little presented in his studies that deepens the sentiment, the reverential spirit of devotion and faith. Against all these perils and trials, these pitfalls and stumbling blocks that come in the way of the very best of students, my text offers the remedy: "Great peace have they that love Thy law, O God, and there is no stumbling to them." Love for the ancestral faith, loyalty to the God of the fathers, culture of the heart, of the spring of emotions, is necessary as a counterbalance to all the

intellectual efforts your studies require of you, in order to help you to find and establish the true peace within. At no stage of your progress allow the old God of Israel, the daily prayer, the holy reverence for the divine books and traditions, to lose their hold upon you. Let no day pass without communion with God in devotion and prayer, without a new consecration of life to your sacred task, without strengthening of the powers that make for faith, for reverence, for virtue and godliness. Whatever doubts or scruples you may have, bring them before us—your teachers and friends—so that we may help you; and, like Abraham, Moses or Job, wrestle with God until you, too, have established peace within and without.

Let me close with another beautiful Midrashic comment on the verse quoted: "All thy children shall be disciples of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."—What does this mean? As long as people derive their truth from mere flesh and blood, there may be misunderstanding and difference of opinion that lead to dissension and bitter strife. But when once men will learn the truth from God himself, because He dwells in their heart and mind as the source of truth, there will be but peace and harmony among them all, because there is but One Truth, One Justice and One Love."

So may the peace of God dwell in your hearts and minds. May the peace of God come to us all, to all men and nations through Israel and its institutions of learning, through our American land. The Lord give strength unto His people, and may He bless all His children with peace. Amen.

11.

PRIEST, PROPHET AND PREACHER.*

RELIGION stands in seeming contrast to the tendencies of our age. The former is pre-eminently the feeling of dependence upon a higher Power and submission to a higher Will, whereas the latter strives for independence, both material and intellectual, and tends to individualism, the assertion of our own will and power. Still, such is due to this being a time of transition. In a home where parental authority is chiefly manifested by the swinging of the rod, by frowning, scolding and punishing, the child sighs for the day when he will be his own master. Thus, having for centuries felt only the leading-strings, the shackles and yoke of bondage with which religion hampered body and soul, people naturally crave for the time when they can tear off the ropes and rid themselves of the burden. But this cannot remain thus forever. Sooner or later they will recognize the fact that the old ties cannot be severed altogether. We do not make, we are born into those relations which fashion life for us. We cannot undo our own past. We are in a far greater measure the children of yesterday than we are the fathers of to-morrow. Our socialistic schemers, who

*Sunday Discourse, Temple Beth El, New York, February 19, 1888.

are eager to find the Archimedean point wherefrom to unhinge the world, learn soon enough that, unless they fight within the line, they can never obtain a foothold. No Robinson Crusoe can rear a society of his own, unless he brings the inheritance of centuries in his arm and in his brain along to his island. The household gods of Troy had to help Aeneas in laying the foundation of the Roman City. You may refuse revering the sanctities and symbols of religion, but you can as little escape her influence as you can that of home and country. She received you at the cradle, and will hold watch over your grave. She is not a mere theory, but a life, the concentrated force of ages. Advance in culture may modify, alter and improve our relation to the great order of things comprised by religion, but cannot uproot it. Education and erudition may place Ernest Renan, David Friedrich Strauss, and Heinrich Heine, side by side and outside of the pale of religion, still the divergency between the Catholic, the Protestant and the Jew goes down to the root of their being. Apple, pear, and cherry tree do not differ only in fruit, blossom and leaf, but in every particle of their substance, in the seed and the cell. Religion is an organic growth. You and I cannot make nor unmake it. It is a historical power which shapes and sways us unconsciously as sentiment and emotion, and consciously as conviction and clearly formulated opinion.

Viewed in this light, I see religion going through three stages of growth, best represented by Priest, Prophet, and Preacher as its exponents.

Last century rationalism discredited the *priest*, denouncing him as an impostor. The reason was that religion was misunderstood. Creeds and rituals were held to be inventions of shrewd and selfish hierarchical despots who, speculating on the frailties of superstitious multitudes, imposed on them certain modes of belief and worship to keep them in utter subjection and ignorance, while they reserved all power and knowledge for themselves. This view is no longer tenable in the face of modern research. Far down in the lower strata of human society we see primitive man, without the priest as guide, in constant dread of hostile powers around, above, and beneath, against which he must be on his guard. In order to feel safe, he must be armed with club and stone in his war against fellow-man and beast, and no less so with amulet and fetich against ghosts and goblins that hover above or below. Into this absolute anarchy, into this chaotic state of darkness, the priest enters as friend and benefactor, establishing order, peace, and law. With the pure flame he ignites on the altar, with the bright light he kindles, with hand and head lifted upwards to the sky where friendly powers shine, he lends expression to the deeper aspiration of man. He adores the good and kind deities above, consigning evil and darkness to the unfriendly powers beneath. To win the favor of the benign gods and ward off the malign influence of the wicked spirits below, is the main object of the established rites of sacrifice and purification. Unlike the magician or sorcerer who rules by fear while conjuring the demon, the priest inspires people with trust in the god

he adores, while keeping aloof from all that appears unclean and belongs to, or suggests, powers of evil. Thus he holds watch over the rights of all and the safety of the tribe, to become the defender of justice and executor of the law. The very stability of the rites secures the welfare of society; for neglect of worship would mean relapse into disorder.

From our advanced standpoint we hardly realize the benefits the priest conferred upon groping and struggling humanity. We can only, while glancing over vast epochs, behold wide gulfs between the savage piling crude stones upon his dead, lest they may rise again and molest him, and the priestly architect rearing huge pyramids and gorgeous temples in honor of kings and gods; or between the beating of drums for the sake of dispelling the ghosts, and the melodious strains of music and song accompanying the sacrifice in Egypt, Chaldea, and Palestine. What a mighty progress from the carving of signs and pictures on rocks and woods, to the art of writing discovered by the priest on the Nile, and again from the star-gazing of the dweller in the wilderness forecasting his destiny, to the marvellous astronomical science arrived at by the priest on the Euphrates! All the beginnings of knowledge and art we owe to the priest, who brought order and system into the crude beliefs of primitive man. But the blessing of one age frequently becomes the curse of the next. The principle of stability grew into an impediment of all progress. Religion became the domain of a privileged class which claimed all godliness, holiness, and wisdom as inalienable rights. A new order of

things was needed which would no longer bar the people out of communion with a world of goodness and bliss, but render religion a blessing, not a prison, for man. This became the prophet's task.

The *prophet* started as the priest's assistant, as his seer and singer; poetry and prophecy having the element of inspiration in common. When in great emergencies out of the usual routine the priest could not cope with the perplexing difficulties, he called upon the seer by means of magic to divine the future. And this manifestation of soul-power offered the seer opportunities of outdoing the priest. For might he not, in a state of ecstasy, of enthusiastic vision, be carried aloft by some new truth far above the priest's ken? Might he not herald forth an idea grander than all the petrified wisdom of priestcraft? Some such efforts we meet with even in heathen life. As contemporary of Moses we hear Balaam mentioned both as sorcerer and prophet coming from Northern Mesopotamia, where the god of prophecy, Nebo (from the same root as *Nabi*), takes his rank among the heavenly rulers. In Hellas and Rome, prophecy led over to classical poetry and philosophy. But nowhere throughout heathendom—for the monk *Buddha* points back to ascetic systems anterior to priestcraft—did any of the prophets dare to reform religion itself by breaking through the system, fixed as it was forever by the priestly caste. This was Judaism's grand mission. The Jewish prophet wrested religion from the hands of the priesthood to transfer it to the people. He brought God down from the inaccessible heights of heaven to

rear His throne in the heart of man. Penetrating into the very nature of the Most High, he unveiled the deep mysteries of life. He rendered religion a revelation of God by showing Him to be mirrored in the spirit of man.

It matters not whether, in accordance with Biblical tradition, we see the beginning of prophecy with Moses, the chief among the prophets, who, however, still holds the magician's staff in his hand when contending with Pharaoh's sorcerers; or whether, with the old school of critics, we behold the first actual prophet in Samuel, who also was a wise soothsayer and with wonder-doing Elijah; or, with the new school, in plain, rustic Amos. Certain it is that only in bold opposition, in fierce antagonism to the priesthood, does the prophet enter upon his great life-task. For he stands for progress, whereas the priest insists on fossilized ritualism. He pleads for humanity, while the priest only defends class interests and authorities of the past. It required no little courage of a man from among the people, with no authority, no pedigree, no tradition nor law to support him, to brave the prejudiced crowds and challenge a mighty priesthood in voicing the unheard-of claims of man in the name of the Eternal God. Renan is right in calling the prophets of Judea revolutionists. They actually aimed at, and finally succeeded in, upsetting the entire foundation of ancient society. It was not so much the question between One God and many gods as whether the world's government should forever remain in charge of the priest, who bribed heaven by sacrifice to appease

its wrath; or whether the world's throne should forever be safely established upon the pillars of justice and mercy. It was once for all time to be decided whether God on high was forever to be flattered and bribed by mighty oppressors, or whether He preferred to dwell among the lowly and contrite of heart; whether religion meant a system of bribe and threat, or a rule of righteousness and love. It was not a theological, but a social, a national issue between prophet and priest. It was nothing less than striking at the very root of State power when Amos, Hosea and Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah hurled forth their thunderbolts against all ceremonialism, condemning it as idolatry, denying to shrines and altars, fasts and feasts the title of holiness, and declaring an humble heart to be the true temple of God, and works of justice and benevolence the only sweet incense God takes delight in. To us to-day these truths seem to appeal to the conscience of the people. But we forget that that conscience was as yet fast asleep, and could only by terrific shocks, by fearful catastrophes, by successive defeats and destructions of states and temples be roused from its stupor. Only by announcing the approaching doom, and by holding out over the impending ruin the promise of future resurrection of the people, could Israel be rendered the teacher of a new principle of life, the establisher of a new order of things. Not Christianity, but Judaism centred upon its matchless prophets, revolutionized the ancient world, and conquered the new. Since then the world's history turns on the contest between these two principles or powers:

priestly conservatism and prophetical progress of humanity. For all the systems of worship and belief established ever since, Mosaic and Rabbinical Judaism, Christianity and Islamism, are but forms of compromise effected for the time. No sooner had the prophet's great charge been fulfilled and his message been committed to writing, than over the Book of Revelation, the law and the tradition, the battle was waged anew between the priest of the second temple, the Sadducee, and the defender of the people's rights, the Pharisee, represented by such men as Hillel and Jesus of Nazareth. Liberalism and conservatism, reform and orthodoxy in synagog or church are but heirs and successors to either prophet or priest, the one placing conscience, rectitude, and purity of hand and heart above the form, the other insisting on the inherited practice and creed as the mainstay of religion; the one regarding the observance of this or that ceremony of no greater importance than whether the national flag should have red or blue as its color, the other constantly dreading heaven's anger in this or in the next world, if any of these rites be discontinued which derive sanctity from their old age, as, in fact, they had their origin in the most primitive state of mankind.

Of course, as each army requires a flag to rally its soldiers for battle, each religion must have certain signs and symbols with which to unite its adherents for the defense of its truths. But if these have lost all their significance and no longer express or suggest any living truth, the demand for better and more adequate forms must be voiced and complied with. This is, and will ever be, the battle-cry of reform.

Now, our age having well-nigh reached the ethical standpoint of the prophet, the task of the modern *Preacher* appears to be very easy. He has no priest-craft to contend with, no authority to challenge, no prejudice to face, no superstition to cope with. His path seems perfectly smooth. He needs merely give utterance to those sentiments which permeate the people; and can he not, with some oratorical power and rhetorical skill, sway his audience in whatever direction he desires? In former times, he had at least to wrestle with harsh, unyielding Bible texts from which certain dogmatic or practical truths had to be elicited, which required some mental gymnastics to perform the feat creditably. To-day the Bible, weighed down under the encumbrances of ritualism and dogmatism, has lost its former hold on the heart as to form the absolutely fixed and necessary starting-point. He is at liberty to choose any subject or text he pleases. Ethics forming the marrow and tissue of life, he is never at a loss to find an interesting topic. And the less worship is alluded to, the more it is appreciated by both liberals and conservatives. If he only succeeds by brilliancy of wit, by versatility of mind and originality of style in holding his hearers spell-bound whilst speaking, his popularity is established. What more is desired?

Still I claim the modern preacher's task is one of the greatest, holiest, and most trying ones. His office is a trust, not from the people to whom, but from God for whom he speaks, and unless his power and authority are felt and recognized as coming, not from man, but from God on high, unless he voices

that which is holiest, dearest, and truest to all, he is no lawful heir to priest and prophet. For into his hands is committed the future of humanity. His hands are to mould the destinies of homes and communities. He is the appointed guardian of souls. Greater demands and claims are made on him than at any other previous time. Greater trials and temptations beset his heart and mind than ever known in former days. Doubts and struggles from within, social pressure from without render his path difficult and thorny. Two worlds are arrayed for battle against each other, and unless he knows how to offer reassuring words of victory, comfort, and peace amidst the fierce contest, he is not the trusty champion needed in the cause of God and humanity.

The issue to-day is no longer between Reform and Orthodoxy, but between a world with God and a world without God. Behold the old foundation of morality shaken, time-honored faith sapped, the age moving, shifting, and changing in feverish inquietude, and life levelled down by pursuits and aims which rouse passion and selfishness to their utmost fury. The seeds of discontent are cast among the masses to threaten society with nihilism and anarchy, and in the general race for happiness only dissonances are heard amidst the colliding interests of classes and vocations on the mart of business, in the court of justice and the council of the nations. The light of culture which streams in through every window of the soul, through press and from platform, school and library, on the high and by-ways of life, to feed the intellect and expand it to its highest capacity,

makes the blood course to the brain, leaving the heart empty and cold. The sombre hue of pessimism and despair darkens the bright prospects of a glorious age, so rich in resources, and so proud of its undreamt-of conquests in every field of labor. The old order of things which comforted the less fortunate with the promise of great treasures of bliss in the next world, no longer satisfies the people. A new earth and a new heaven are being ushered in, a human life which is to carry heaven within its own bosom and to reveal God in its own life. And who should stand as sponsor, as mediator between a world dying and a world nascent and promising, but the modern preacher? Amidst the surging flood of new ideas, amidst the restless progress of humanity, he must point to the immovable Rock of Ages beneath whom all ages are to take shelter against any storm that rages. When all appears unstable and unsafe, both his words and actions must tell that heaven means *principle*. When in our mercenary age things and persons are measured by outward success, he must, like the monument erected in honor of George Washington, tower up, "as the straight line of truth," as the pillar of rectitude, unyielding, unbending, holding forth the all-surpassing lesson of integrity of character. When all are out in search of truth, never satisfied, never at rest, he must point inward to the core of things, to truthfulness, and upwards to the heart of hearts, the Fountain-head of all truth. Like the prophet of old, it is the preacher's glorious task to plead the cause of the feeble and the lowly, and side with the humble and needy. Yes, his place is in

the break between the militant classes, between the warring views and interests, to help in building up a new system of life, in the establishing of a new order of justice, love and peace.

Yet how can he do so, without the fiery eloquence of a holy conviction, without the live-coal of heavenly inspiration upon his tongue? How can he expect, like the prophet of yore, to rouse a storm within his hearers' consciences to humble the pride of the haughty, to curb passion and make cruelty in high or low places tremble and sink into dust, without the sweeping force of irresistible earnestness? How can he hope to kindle in the bosom of his audience a fire which burns up every idol of popular favor and consumes vice and selfishness to make all hunger and thirst for righteousness and love, if truth has not set every fibre of his being ablaze? Pyrotechnics are of no avail. At the end people will learn to discriminate between chaff and wheat. In spite of his heavy tongue, Moses became the greatest of prophets. The pulpit must stand for consistency. It must not be degraded into a platform, swayed by every change of public opinion to render the speaker a weather-cock indicating the fluctuations of the atmosphere, or a reed which bends to every wind. It ought not be transformed into a stage where the truth is not preached, but acted with the comedian's skill, now to make the people laugh, and then with simulated tragic to move them into tears. What our time is most in need of is faith in God and in humanity, a faith which still moves mountains and performs wonders of resurrection. Religion must be hope

and cheering comfort and encouraging trust in life's great Ordainer. And the preacher can neither afford to ignore the past, nor be blind to the great issues of the present time; but as the flame on the altar of the second temple was ignited by the spark hidden in the ashes of the first, so must reverential piety for the past kindle the hope for a brighter future. Neither learning nor art, but wealth of sentiment and firmness of principle make the leader. Russian folk-lore tells of heroes who, after having achieved life-long wonders of prowess, could not die before imbuing their successors with their last breath to equip them with strength to emulate their greatness and fill the land with fame. In order to build up humanity in all its grandeur and divine glory, we must, both preacher and hearer, imbibe the very breath of all the prophets and great geniuses of all ages and lands, to feel their glow of enthusiasm and love for all that is and ever will be dear and holy to mankind. May God aid us in this endeavor! Amen.

12.

THE NEW TEMPLE A TESTIMONY TO OUR FAITH IN ISRAEL'S GOD, IN HUMANITY'S FUTURE.*

WITH fervent thanksgiving to the Most High, we have entered this house filled with glory, thrilled with emotions which no words can express, and like Jacob of old at Beth El, we see a ladder reaching up to heaven with angels ascending and descending, and the words are echoed in our ear: "How awe-inspiring is this place! Truly this is a house of God; and this is a gate of heaven."

Still what is all architectual beauty and grandeur, all harmony of design and color, all magnificence of form, unless it embodies a living truth; unless it enshrines an idea more enduring than the granite rock out of which a structure is hewn?

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, unto Thy name belongeth the glory!" The fire from heaven must descend and fill this house with the divine glory. Such is the purpose, such is the meaning, of this dedication.

I take my text from Haggai, the prophet (ii.7-9): "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts, and greater will be the latter glory of the

*Dedication of the new Temple Beth El, New York, Sept. 18, 1891.

house than the former, and I will give peace in this place."

The erection of a new shrine for our ancient faith in the heart of our great American metropolis, is in itself an occasion of joy and satisfaction to a far larger circle than that circumscribed by Beth-El's congregation. I claim that every new temple reared to the glorification of God is an advancement of the cause of humanity. Every dome gives the soul an upward bent; every sacred spire stands for higher aspirations. We know, all who read the Sacred Book know, that God, who is all spirit, whose glory transcends the heavens, and around whose throne suns and stars swing through aeons in majestic pageant, requires no house built by human hands; that He cares not for the glitter of gold, for decorated walls, but for hearts humble and upright. But man needs consecrated spots that fill him with wonder, with admiration and awe.

Man wants the impress of beauty in order to soar up to the sublimity of the divine. Glance over mankind's path through the ages, and you will find the progress of civilization marked by the ruins of temples, which in their very decay bespeak a glory which never fades. The frames and forms of worship perish; worship itself, the soul of religion, never! Each flaming altar, each lighted lamp, each lofty dome symbolizes man's longing for the harmonies of a higher world. From the sanctuaries of God, man ever derived his greatness and beauty, his valor and his virtue. Excelsior! is the cry of heaven-aspiring faith. Were it true that our enlightened age needed

temples no longer, then we had better give up the hope of advancing any further. For science, with its complicated problems, lands man in a sea of despair, and ethics divested of God, duty void of the Great Commander fails to shield against the dagger of the suicide. How can a man stand on a ladder and yet hold it in the air? We need a stronger arm than ours to sustain us, to shelter us from life's tempests and storms. We need the uplifting power of religion to-day more than ever before. Each new temple symbolizes this perpetual need, the perpetuity of the *ideal* world.

How cheap is the wisdom of those who say: "Temples of charity we want," not of religion; homes for the helpless, not for the Great Helper above! The very men who at great sacrifice reared the magnificent shrines of God are the ones who built and who maintain our glorious institutions of philanthropy. It is the joy of sacrifice that enriches the heart and turns each temple into a channel of blessedness.

But a far mightier lesson must this beauteous house preach, a far more wondrous truth must this mighty organ peal forth. It is to the glorification of Israel's Only One, to the perpetuation and propagation of Judaism, that this Temple was built. If every house of God is a tower of strength to feeble mortals, the Jewish Synagog stands forth as an ensign of the nations, as a banner of victory, an arch of triumph, proclaiming the irresistible power of truth over error, of justice over wrongdoing, of liberty over oppression, of light over darkness. Four thousand

years the light of Abrahamitic faith has shone as a perpetual lamp to illumine man's path, and no storm was fierce enough to quench it, no sun of human culture bright enough to eclipse it. And however dreary our journey, however thorny our path, however furious the lashes we have received at the hands of our persecutors, our feet have not grown weary, our eyes have not become dim, our strength has not abated. Here we stand, the living witnesses of the remotest past, the sons of the Chaldean shepherds, on this virgin soil of America, under the genial sun of liberty to unfurl the flag unstained by any disloyalty, and to proclaim a truth that challenges all creeds in loftiness of thought, in purity of sentiment, in broadness of mind and in comprehensiveness. Wipe out every miracle from the pages of history, sacred or profane; efface every trace of divine interference by Darwinian methods, the Jew is still a miracle, every synagog a finger-post of Divine Providence. Though despised by the builders, the Jew has become the corner-stone of civilization, the main pillar in the temple of humanity. Sneer not at his bent-down stature, mock not at his sharply-cut features; he has carried your load of shame, ye nations! He has been singled out to battle for the truth you crave after, to champion the right and the justice upon which your well being is founded. He has been, and, alas still is, the Man of Sorrow whom you crucified, who bled and suffered for you. Yet enter his gates of worship, listen to his teaching and prayers. The God he adores is the Father of all, whose true son is man, endowed with His light of reason,

drawing life from His empyrean of love. No partiality of creed, no monopoly of heaven, no hell for heretics, no damnation for sinners! All life but one revelation of God all humanity but one Kingdom of Righteousness, and whoseoever is clean of hands and pure of heart is on the road to the sun-lit hill of blessedness, forever!

Ought we not be thankful to the benign Ruler of history that, under the blessed sway of the free institutions of our country, we are permitted to stand here on this beautiful spot, amidst surroundings which suggest broadness and freshness, vigor and verdure, and herald forth these doctrines, which cannot but enlist the attention and command the recognition of the wide world? Too long have we been forced to live in obscurity and hide our light before men. Thank heaven, the American Jew is not shut up in narrow streets, nor impeded in his industrial progress, nor hampered in his social success. All the more must he hail the opportunity of casting off the reproach of materialism and infidelism, and offering up the testimony before the wide world that, as little as his God, the Rock of Ages, has changed, so little has he swerved in his loyalty to the cause of truth, in his allegiance to God and to humanity! Our Temple is the seal of our faith in the perpetuity of Judaism.

But greater still is thy task, Temple Beth-El, brighter thy future as pioneer of progress, as banner-bearer of Reform! On Moriah's hill the seer once stood, pointing to the house on the top of the mountain over whose gates the words are inscribed in letters

of fire: "Mine house shall be a house of prayer for all nations." To scale these heights and swing wide open the doors of humanity's temple is modern Israel's mission. People marvel at the Jew, because he numbers so many centuries; the greater marvel is that his religion never grows old, but forms a well of perennial life, a fount of youth for heart and spirit. It ever advanced with the age; it was rejuvenated by the morning dew of each new era of liberty. Germany cradled the new Moses that broke the shackles of mediaeval Egypt from off the neck of the Jew. Then Reform, the twin sister of Light, came and pruned and trimmed the ancient tree to make it bloom again, as the spring arrived, and hold forth its shade to cover the nations. And behold, the venerable mother that, centuries ago, gave birth to the world's great religions, took off the veil of widowhood, and felt imbued with new strength and hope, to vie with her proud daughter, looking for the time when her old covenant will rebuild the house spacious enough to embrace all the children of God—religion humanized and humanity religionized. This became the aim of modern Judaism. And nowhere so as on our free American soil. "Lay aside the wanderer's staff. Fling away the Oriental garb! Render the New World thy Jerusalem! Here is the Holy Land, where God works justice and salvation!" This was the battle-cry of Beth-El's founder, the illustrious Reform champion, Dr. Einhorn. This prophetic summons his pulpit and his Sabbath school re-echoed. To these views and principles Beth-El's new house is dedicated. Yet not to lead a mere

wing of Israel's army, and separate from our brethren at large, but, with united forces, to ascend the hill of Zion and give light to the nations, is our aim and purpose. Piety coupled with progress, loyalty to the past entwined with liberal-mindedness, is our watchword.

Nor shall it be the mere preaching, but the practice of the great principle of broad-minded humanity that this Temple will stand for. Not merely prayer and praise, but promotion of peace and establishment of justice; not creed, but deed, is Judaism's object. Not merely pulpit, but pew; not words, but actions, not the beliefs, but the lives of the members, manifest the Temple's sanctity and glory. May Beth El's new mount tower high in righteousness! May its three pillars, Enlightenment, Faith and Practical Love, grow in firmness, in solidity and in far-reaching power. When, in ancient times, a new house was erected, a live coal from off the old hearthstone was taken, to ignite therewith the fire upon the new. So was the sacred flame of the second Temple kindled with the sparks, kept deep down in the earth, from the first. We, too, bring along all the sweet and sacred memories of our old temple, all the dear reminiscences of the past and our departed ones, to work as an inspiration and an incentive to greater efforts in the new, in order that greater shall be the latter glory of the house than the former, and that our benign God render this house a promoter of peace, a link of friendship among the various synagogs and congregations, a source of blessing to all classes, creeds and races, that there may be written

upon our Temple: "Holy to God on high! Blessing and Peace to all families of men on earth!"

And so I consecrate thee, O beauteous place, unto the worship of the Eternal, the living God of Israel, the Holy One whom all men shall yet own and adore as Father and King! Be thou a home of light and truth, a treasure-house of comfort and inspiration to every Israelite, even to the stranger that visits thy gates! May the cheerless be here gladdened, the despondent endowed with new courage and hope, and the bereft ones feel that they have still a Father and a Friend on high! May the prosperous learn here the lesson of gratitude, the proud become meek, and the erring find the road to truth and happiness.

I consecrate thee, holy ark with the scrolls of the Law, Israel's banner. Be thou a blessed stream of holiness! May God's holy spirit dwell within thee, and when those gates are lifted, may we hear the voice of the Lord: "Not by power, nor by might, but by My spirit!"

I consecrate thee, perpetual lamp, emblem of life eternal, symbol of Israel's never fading truth! and thee, the Reader's Desk, table of God. Be a fount of living water for thirsty souls! Awaken thou the noblest emotions, the sweetest sentiments in all! Thou majestic organ, peal forth the glory of the Most High! Sway the hearts for good, soothe all sufferings, kindle with thy swelling anthems the enthusiasm of the people for all that is holy!

I consecrate thee, pulpit, holy altar of God, to the cause of truth and righteousness. May heaven's

fire ever come down to endow the speaker's tongue with courage, with the sincerity of conviction, with the earnestness of a man of God! May all idolatry and falsehood be banished, the right defended, loyalty and patriotism, purity and integrity be taught, every soul be uplifted, every heart quickened and refreshed, everything good promoted!

I consecrate thee, Sabbath School, to the glorification of God, to the promotion of Judaism, to the dissemination of truth and of love, to the education and elevation of character, to the development of noble manhood and womanhood!

I consecrate the whole house, the entire congregation to the service of God, to the highest welfare of humanity. May it be a center and focus of light, of righteousness and love! Amen.

13.

THE THREEFOLD PURPOSE OF THE SYNAGOG.*

THIS is a great day of rejoicing for Sinai Congregation and for the entire community of Chicago, and we all from near and far rejoice with you and congratulate you, Rabbi and members of Sinai Temple, upon your glorious achievement. The majestic monument the like of which in beauty and awe-inspiring grandeur is scarcely to be found throughout the land, and which you have reared here for the glory of Israel's God and for the service of humanity, is a joy to the beholder, an ornament or pride to the city and a testimony to the large-heartedness of the Congregation, and to the power and efficacy of Sinai's rabbi. Indeed, the tongue falters, were I to express the feelings that move and thrill me at this moment. All I can say is that it is with unspeakable joy that I participate in these festivities, and I deeply appreciate the honor of being called upon to voice the gladsome thanksgivings of this large assembly to the Most High, who has permitted us to see this day of great doings and still greater expectations for the future, and to consecrate this majestic edifice to its high and holy purposes.

*Address delivered at the Dedication of the new Sinai Temple, Chicago, March 1, 1912.

Thirty-six years ago it was my privilege to dedicate the former temple, which during the early years of my ministry with you had risen in magnificence out of the ruins of the great fire. Oh what a noble record of heroic struggles and signal triumphs, of courageous efforts and brilliant successes does that temple as well as its predecessors now recall! Only a few of the noble toilers, the high-minded pioneers who stood sponsors at Sinai's cradle—let me but mention the venerable father and uncle of your honored President, God bless them!—have under God's special favor been spared to embody these sweet memories for us, and to witness the realization of Sinai's boldest dream, that of having the religious, the educational and social work centered and focused in one gigantic structure. Indeed, *progress* is inscribed on Sinai's banner. The seer's inspiring words: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation without sparing; spread to the right and to the left that thy seed shall possess the nations!" were with thrilling eloquence echoed forth from your pulpit, and noble was the response that has come from the pew. Here, then, is the text for my dedicatory address: "Greater shall be the glory of the new house than that of the former, and in this place will I give peace, says the Lord of Hosts." (Haggai II., 9.)

Your Temple about to be consecrated to Israel's imperishable truths and to mankind's highest ideals of righteousness and love stands on *historic Jewish ground* in a deeper sense that many realize. In three-fold glory, with a three-fold object in view,

the Synagog has ever since its foundation stood forth as mother of Church and Mosque, as a "House of Worship"—*Beth Tefillah*—a "House of Religious Instruction and Education"—*Beth Ha Midrash*—and a "House of Communal Gathering for Social Service"—*Beth ha Kneseth*—following the maxim of the Men of the Great Assembly: "On the Torah, on Worship and on Beneficence Rests the Moral Welfare of the World.' The first, we are told, is typified by Abraham's Mount of Vision; the second by Isaac's field; the third by Jacob's house. For all these your Temple offers a large scope, an ever widening sphere of activity.

As a hill of God this sanctuary of worship towers above all your homes, inviting all to ascend to the serene realm of the ideal. *Sinai zeh sullam*, "Sinai spells scaling the heavenly heights of truth and righteousness," say the rabbis. True, each shrine or altar, church steeple or dome is symbol or token of man's upward striving and yearning. But, as Israel's God was never enshrined within the walls of its temple, nor encompassed by the heavens and heaven of heavens, so he who enters this house of God finds Him only in the craving for truth and justice, in the yearning for purity and goodness that wells up in the heart within and mirrors the Infinite and Holy One above. Herein lies the secret of Israel's faith. It is unending aspiration and elevation of soul and mind, constant progress with the advancing ages of history. We have no Old Testament. The fount of Divine Revelation never slackened for the genius of the Jew. Judaism's well-spring of truth

never ran dry. From Abraham, who rose to Moriah's height to behold the Only One God as the Father of man, to the seers and sages of our time who read the ancient Scriptures in the light of our own knowledge, there is but one continuous stream of light, one dynamic process of intellectual and spiritual growth and development to render Judaism a living, ever-progressive, ever-expanding truth, an ever-rejuvenating, liberalizing and humanizing force.

This great fact of history was obscured and lost sight of in the Ghetto Synagog with its petrified Oriental forms, its mechanical system of worship and its obsolete ceremonialism and antiquated litanies. Thanks, everlasting thanks to our heroic regenerators of Judaism, the prophets of our own time, our Reform Temple opened the avenues of the soul anew to the life-quickening and world-conquering verities of Israelite's heritage, and with its powerful appeal to mind and heart and its inspiring and uplifting forms, invested worship with new life and meaning, filling the courts of God again with the beauty of holiness.

And among all the Reform temples in the land, Sinai's Temple at the very outset took its stand in the foremost ranks, espousing, without hesitancy and without compromise, the principle of Liberalism, of Modernism and broad Humanitarianism while loyal to Judaism's historic task. "For My house shall be a house of prayer for all the nations" was written over its gates. And with the courage of consistency you established divine service on the day of common rest in order to have your house of worship filled

from week to week with devout men and women, young and old, from each household, eager to enroll in the army of battlers for Israel's law of truth and righteousness, and be lifted up by the peerless powers of your leader to the lofty realms of the ideal. Who dares question your Judaism, or blame you for thus satisfying a religious need not otherwise provided for? Least of all, I, who did not merely introduce the Sunday service alongside of the traditional Sabbath service, but who, in the years of plastic, formative youth that I spent with you, imbibed here the enthusiasm and zeal that spurred me on to soar to the heights of keener vision and to strive with my humble powers to become an interpreter of our great past in the spirit of our age of evolution, endeavoring to harmonize modern thought with the ancient faith.

All the more would I on this grand occasion urge you not to stand aloof, but to work hand in hand with all the progressive forces, all the liberal elements of Judaism the world over. More than ever are we to-day in need of concerted action in view of the reactionary tide that has set in. We must present a united front against the un-American and non-religious *Kehillah* movement, which threatens to erect new Ghetto walls in this free country and to deflect the Jew from his historic world-task and world-wide truth.

Do you glory in your radicalism? Be it so. The most radical Jew, if he is but a Jew by conviction and faith, is a thousand times more of a Jew than the nationalist who belittles the faith our fathers suffered

and died for, and who regards the Hebrew language as of greater importance than the *Ten Words* of Sinai which blazed forth in seventy tongues of fire, to illumine all the nations of the world.

What the Jew needs most of all amidst this strenuous intellectual and industrial life, is a God under whose everlasting arms he may seek shelter from storm and stress, a house of prayer to find the God within. Amidst the three R's that dominate life and learning to-day, we need as the fourth and most essential R, *Reverence*—"the holy awe"—which, as Goethe says, "is the best in man." We need religion, as the heavenly source of Righteousness, the tribunal of Responsibility. So may the glory of your Temple be manifested in greater power of spirituality, so that new faith and courage, new strength and hope, new comfort and light come to each and all who enter here, member or stranger, and God give peace to every striving and struggling soul.

And then there is the *Beth ha Midrash*, "the Sanctuary of Religious Instruction and Education," that opens its portals here to larger assemblies of men and women aspiring to truth than heretofore. The Synagog was for the Jew at all times "the Shul," the house of learning, the school that endowed his mind with knowledge, that trained him for life's highest duties and equipped him with soldier-like courage for the defense of the right and the true, with priestly sanctity consecrating him to his mission. It taught him the grand lessons of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man to which he adhered despite an unbrotherly world about him,

It inculcated in him the principle of justice, however unjustly the life without dealt with him. It echoed forth the words of love and peace amid environments of hatred and bloodshed. Yes, it was a field in which the seeds of truth were sown in the hearts of young and old to fill all minds with light and enrich all hearts with the treasures of the spirit. The golden candlestick, the *Menorah*, is Judaism's emblem, and its ultimate aim and hope is the time when "the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters covers the sea."

And in obedience to this call the Reform pulpit strove to render the *Torah* anew the educator of the people and the Synagog a schoolhouse of humanity. It endeavored again to democratize Israel's religion and to bring Judaism's treasures home to all, to woman as well as to man, to child as well as to adult, to non-Jew as well as to Jew. And whoever has come within reach of Sinai's Temple felt that higher demands were made upon Sinai's pulpit to make it a far-reaching power for religious enlightenment and liberalism, an educating influence for a clearer comprehension of the problems and the great issues of life; they beheld here the light of the new day, and not a few that were lost in the labyrinth of doubt, under the guidance of your great preacher, again found the road to the city of God. Sinai's much-assailed liberalism made the congregation not merely liberal-minded, but still more liberal-hearted, since its pulpit taught not alone truth for the thinker, but still more forcibly the all-captivating, prophetic lesson of social justice and righteousness.

And yet, friends, we would all deceive ourselves, did we shut our eyes to the fact that our liberalism has failed to kindle the lamps of learning in our modern homes and social circles. We can no longer boast, as did the former generation, that Judaism knows of no distinction between laymen and clergy, because familiarity with the Torah was the rule and ignorance the exception. The hunger after the word of God, the thirst after the deeper fountains of Jewish knowledge is sadly on the decrease amongst "the people of the Book." It is true, and I am proud to state it here, that Sinai's Rabbi and Sinai Congregation have at all times manifested their ardent devotion and active zeal for the propagation and promotion of Jewish learning, the one as an inspiring influence and teacher of many of our students and the other as the generous-hearted supporter of the Hebrew Union College. But we need more of the light and more of the oil for the *Menorah*, more lamps and more lights for the whole household of American Israel. May the new field opened here bring to you and all of us a greater harvest. May the light that emanates here from pulpit and Sabbath School shine forth with ever greater effulgence that "all thy sons and daughters be disciples of the Lord, and great be the peace of thy children."

But the crowning glory of this new Temple lies in its being a house for the gathering of far larger numbers than Congregation and worshipping assemblies, a *Beth ha Kneseth*, a house for communal life and social service in its best and most comprehensive meaning. Yet, far from being an innovation,

a departure, this is but a restoration of the house of God to its pristine glory. The very Kiddush that used to be recited in the Synagog on Sabbath eve and morn was originally intended for the poor and homeless that were housed and fed in the adjoining rooms devoted to benevolence and redeeming love. Your work here, then, is but an extension of the ancient practice. And to this is added a feature of great significance. For, whereas our mode of worship and our religious views, so different from the traditional ones, necessarily create divisions in our camp between Orthodoxy and Reform, here the Scriptural word holds true: "The work of righteousness establishes peace." Here all differences are forgotten. Here Jew meets Jew. Here man helps and uplifts man. Here rich and poor, strong and feeble, high and low come together as children of the One God and Father. Here the commonest needs and requirements of man will be hallowed by the principle of mutual helpfulness and love. And well might the Scriptural verse: "In that day there shall be upon the bells and the pots, 'Holy to the Lord,'" be inscribed on your door, or else the classical motto: *Introite et hic dii sunt*: "Enter, for here, too, the Deity dwells!"

Of one of the noblest martyrs of the Hadrianic persecution, R. Hananya ben Teradion, the touching story is told that, when on the road to his glorious death he met his companion and fellow-martyr, Eleazar ben Parta, who was both a master of the law and a philanthropic worker, to whom he said: "Happy thou who didst not merely study the law

of truth, but also practiced the law of righteousness and benevolence throughout life, while I, alas, have only been a teacher of the Torah, but have failed to translate the law into life and practical love." Only when he was reminded of the fact that he, too, had done deeds of kindness and helpfulness when the occasion offered, did he feel comforted; for, "Only the practice of righteousness and goodness brings God as a living God of truth home to our fellow-men." What a beautiful lustre does this Talmudic passage cast on Judaism's teaching of old, and on this most modern house of God! Sinai Temple was always among the very foremost in works of philanthropy and education, of mutual helpfulness and social service, thus translating Sinai's teaching into practical life and rendering religion a living power to win all hearts for the God of Israel, and its blessings will grow with the enlarged opportunities.

So may your Temple with its three-fold splendor, your Congregation and Rabbi with the three-fold crown of glory earn three-fold, nay thousand-fold blessing from Jew and Gentile near and far, and peace and joy unending come to you from God, whose Shekinah may ever rest upon his place! Amen.

14.

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF JUDAISM.*

AT THE beginning of this century, Schleiermacher, the great Christian theologian, brought about a great religious revival throughout enlightened Germany, by delivering a course of lectures on religion before unbelievers for the purpose of convincing them that religion is the cry and need of all ages.

Such a course of lectures has been proposed by the Young Men's Hebrew Association of this city for the purpose of reviving Jewish sentiment and the Jewish faith in our midst. And speaking under its auspices to-night, I propose to show that the basis of Judaism is Jewish Ethics and that, as it has substantially carried the world for the last two thousand years, so it will hold and support and carry humanity for many thousand years to come, until, indeed, its highest hopes and ideals will have been realized.

Ethics is the dame of fashion, much courted now, the pet-child of the age. Religion—poor thing!—is declared to be very old. Her bright days are said to be over. She is expected soon to take the veil and go to a nunnery. For who would marry her, God himself being on trial? "There is nothing new under

*Address delivered before the Young Men's Hebrew Association, at Temple Beth El, New York, December 20, 1886.

the sun." In the classic land of Greece, ethics was first offered as a substitute for religion at a time when the very foundations of society were sapped, and the old home-spun virtue and piety of those pagans scoffed and sneered at. The old Olympian gods with their frivolous passion and lewdness had become a laughing-stock, when quaint and whimsical Socrates beleaguered the streets of Athens to offer virtue as the most desirable good to every passer-by. "If the world's rulers do not prefer the just to the unjust, it is better to die than to live," said the lofty-spirited heathen who put the seal of martyrdom upon his protest against pagan folly. His strange life and his tragic death gave rise to the grand ethical system of Plato, with Divine Goodness as its central idea; then came Aristotle and the Epicureans and the Stoics, forming different schools and systems of ethics. Still, however grand and admirable as monuments of the Grecian genius, they could not save the ancient world from shipwreck. Philosophy can never replace religion. When once the heart-strings binding man to a heavenly Commander of life are broken asunder, the earth quakes and humanity quivers and shivers with pain and agony, until the God is found who would hold and redeem the world anew. The name of the great I Am, the Lord of Hosts, had to be spelled out to summon man to duty anew.

I need not point to old China where the sage Confucius, nor to India where the princely hermit Gautama Buddha attempted to replace the old religions by new ethical doctrines and with similar results. Suffice it to say that the present tide runs

in parallel lines. The flood-gates of the heart have been dried up by rationalism. Skepticism has shaken the strongholds of religion. Critical and historical research has undermined the dogmas of the Church, the creeds. Revelation and retribution are arraigned by doubt, ridiculed by blasphemers. Therefore the cry goes forth for humanitarian ethics.

At the dawn of the new era Baruch Spinoza, the Jew, dissatisfied with Church and Synagog, reared his marvelous edifice of ethics on the foundation of pure, cold reason, and in his train followed the English moralists. At the close of the last century Immanuel Kant, the Robespierre in the realm of thought, after having demolished the old form of reasoning, offered his stern philosophy of *duty* built on "the categorical imperative" of "thou oughtst;" and soon after him August Comte in France started social ethics. Since then one ethical system after the other has sprung up to embarrass the learned no less than the multitude. In the former century it took a man of the size of Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing's Nathan the Wise, to solve the dilemma of choosing between the three great religions, in pointing to the old Jewish tale of the three rings, which had the prize accorded to the one which would charm most by fostering heart-winning virtue and love.

Nowadays it is rather difficult for any one to decide between the innumerable ethical theories presented, egotistic or altruistic, utilitarian or intuitional, and tell which is the best. And yet you hear constantly the demand made for a pure and simple

morality divested of religion, the kernel without the shell, as they say. Says a recent writer in the *Popular Science Monthly*: "God cannot make morality. He has to be moral himself before he can sanction it, and if we know God as moral, we know morality apart from the idea of God. The problem of the day, therefore, is the formulation and enforcement of a natural morality, a morality resulting from the nature of man and the conditions of his existence." Aside now from the question, whether there exists such a thing as natural morality, whether this is not a contradiction in itself—I simply ask: Can you enforce morality? How? By the club of the policeman? By the authority of the State? Or by society at large? This is no morality. A morality enforced from without is no longer morality. All your systems cannot create a conscience, cannot put that sentinel before the gates of the heart and make him ring the bell of alarm whenever the foe comes near. Cut loose from religion, ethics is but a broken cistern that holds no water. However delicious the fruit, you cannot make it grow without stem and blade. Call your conscience a magnetic needle in the direction of the right and the good, but forget not that without some great magnetic power around and above, no needle will work. Herbert Spencer, the idol of almost every American college graduate, has quite recently been mercilessly cast down from his pedestal by Sidgwick, who sums up his survey of the methods of ethics by saying: "Without religious sanction or a similar assumption, the ethical Cosmos falls back into chaos, and ethical science cannot be constructed."

His opinion is endorsed by no less a philosopher than Wilhelm Wundt, one of the master-minds of philosophical Germany to-day, in his recent great work on "Ethics," in which he emphasizes "the need of religion, not merely as the means of elevating man to the highest morality, but as holding up before the human race a common purpose and scope, the greatest of all moral truths, which alone makes life worth living for, that man with his finite ends is linked to the Infinite Unity with its infinite ends, that are past finding out."

The fact is, the whole ethical movement of the present day is the symptom of a disease rather than a cure. Because the heart of the social machinery, emptied of its life-blood, does not work well, the vital fluid is expected to run from brain downwards instead of taking its regular course from heart to brain. The feverish spasms of the age are due to general debility, in consequence of the low temperature of religion. To use a homely illustration, there is a woman watching days and nights without ceasing at a mother's or husband's sick bed, not even allowing her delicate frame the necessary rest, amidst the all-absorbing care and anxiety for her beloved one. Offer to take her place, to give her respite if but for a few hours, and she would refuse, saying: "No; never will I leave this place until I see my dear one better." But how great is your astonishment, when, after a few weeks, as you see her again attend the sick, the pathetic words fall from her lips in plaintive strains: "Oh, duty! stern duty! for thy sake I hold out here, sacrificing my life, though the

task is hard!" Is that the same true, plain, affectionate, devoted woman you saw the other day? The same staunch-hearted, good soul that never pondered, never reasoned, never thought of herself? You cannot help searching for the strange cause that cast a shadow upon her innermost being, a spell of doubt, a poison-drop of bitterness into her heart to chill her affection, that she now is in need of a stimulant, a tonic. What she to-day calls duty is to serve as substitute for the natural bent of her soul, for the unaffected goodness and piety that are fast giving out. There is a break in the harmony of her life. Such a break we observe to-day. The tide of ethical culture indicates a transition, a change in the world's religion. People are tired of walking in the narrow grooves of dogma and ritual. They sigh for a religion which is broad as the whole man, as wide as the globe, as high as the heavens, and deep enough to embrace all life, all thought and sentiment and make it sweet and cheerful and holy. And the question with which we are deeply concerned to-night is, whether we are safe, whether tide and wind are favorable to our ship, whether Judaism is drifting in a direction to meet these demands.

I say, it is. For Judaism is the only religion which made humanity, the moral up-building and perfection of man, the ethical structure of society, its starting point and its end. Judaism alone has the salvation and happiness of all men and nations here on earth as its goal. Judaism alone among all religions has the welfare of society at large and not merely the individual salvation in view. Jewish ethics is human-

itarian, is cosmopolitan and philanthropic. Owing to long oppression and seclusion, the Jew had well-nigh unlearned the fact that before speaking to Abraham, God spoke to man; that before Israel was made the covenant-people, God made a covenant with the whole race of man; that, in fact, Judaism is based on a Revelation of God to all men; that the Bible opens with the first records of man, pointing to the great brotherhood of man as the final goal of history; that our sacred Prophets first voiced the eternal rights, the solemn demands, the grand hopes and ideals of man; that our Psalmists rung forth in matchless strains, in undying melodies as from the world's harp the deep longings, the awful pangs and the glorious thanksgivings of the heart of man; that throughout our entire literature and history runs like a golden thread the idea that all the doings of the nations are but the preparation, the fitting-up of the earth for the time when humanity is but *one*, one kingdom of divine righteousness and love. Yet, this was the spell by which the Roman empire was captured for Israel's God. You are all, no doubt, familiar with the answer Hillel, half a century before the Christian era, gave to the Roman who mockingly wanted to hear the Jewish Law expounded while he stood before him on one foot: "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you! This is the law; the rest is merely the commentary." Recent research, however, has placed it beyond doubt that these and similar lessons of simple and pure humanitarian ethics have gone forth in Greek garb from Jewish writers in the shape of sermons, of

Jewish mission tracts, of poems under the guise of ancient seers and singers of heathendom, to captivate the Greek and Roman world centuries before Christianity appeared on the stage. In the garb of the Greek philosopher and poet and also of a simple pedler, the versatile cosmopolitan Jew of Alexandria carried his Jewish lessons of Ethics into the heart of paganism, to make imperial Rome through her very poet laureate, Virgil, sigh for the millenium of peace and righteousness. Indeed, Judaism ploughed the field and cast the seeds hundreds of years before the Church came to reap the golden harvest and take all the credit to herself. Christianity misspelled the name. It was not *a* Jew, but *the* Jew who built and cemented a tottering and shaken world anew.

Jewish ethics gave life a higher meaning and purpose, made it earnest, made it real. It is an old truism: As man is, so is his God. What was life to the Greek but a race for pleasure and sport, a play-ground? Their men and their gods were, as Heinrich Heine said, "but jesters compared with the serious Hebrew." Still, Judaism kept alike remote from the gloomy, despondent view of the Hindoo hermit, alike distant from asceticism and frivolous gaiety. It beholds in the whole of life, with its dark and bright sides, the working of a good and holy God everywhere, thus rendering it ever hopeful and cheerful. And this optimistic, yet sober view of life, this vigorous idealism made the prophet, moulded the Jew, created the Bible, the Old Testament and the New, and determined the course of human history. Matthew Arnold says: "Light and Sweetness,"

that is beauty and clearness, art, science and philosophy "came from the Greeks", "salvation" that is the inner beauty and harmony of life, law, righteousness and holiness "from the Jews." It was not so much the idea of the unity as the faith in a moral government of the world or, to use Matthew Arnold's words, "The power that maketh for righteousness," which made humanity kneel before the Jewish God. The abstract notion of a Divine Unity has been arrived at also elsewhere by philosophical speculation. But none beheld God face to face, seeing His glory mirrored in justice, kindness and goodness, as did Moses. Just as the magnet attracts the iron by virtue of its chemical affinities, so did the Jew through his ethical qualities touch upon the moral essence of God, thus striking the very key-note of religion and humanity. "Before revealing the Law of Israel," says the Midrash, "the Lord offered it to the heathen nations, but they refused it, being neither chaste, nor kind, neither fond of justice nor of reverential piety." This means to convey the great psychological truth that, through his finer humanity, his Abraham nature, the Jew found the true God for mankind, and this ethical monotheism could not help again refining and hallowing life and sentiment. From the Jewish conception of a just and holy God emanated the sacredness of life, of home, of honor, of property and labor, the power of justice and love, while through these very virtues God's nature was discerned. In the prophet's mind the human and the divine melted and became one.

Compare the ethical standard of Greece and Rome with the Jewish. What was the scale man was

measured by in Greece? Only as a member of the State, only as far as he was of use to the nation, he was valued. A foreigner had no rights, no claim upon the law. A barbarian, says the great Aristotle, was less than a horse. Still worse off was the slave. He was not treated any better than any other piece of property. And can there be a home where woman is but a tool in the service of race preservation, a chattel excluded from decent society of men, yea, even from the table of her husband, unless when she has to wait on him, yet never his equal; where pure, chaste love is rarely found, and the marriage vow of little account? What name is dearer than that of mother and child? Yet its spell cannot have been felt where the father could at pleasure disown his tender infant, and with immunity expose it to cruel death. Alas for the invalid and the cripple! Who cared for them, they being of little benefit to the community? Murder seemed to be the best expedient for these unfortunate ones. Nor did the law make any provision for the needy, the orphans and widows. They had to thank their good fortune if, on some unusual occasion, one of the wealthy citizens would give special proof of his free, noble birth (this is the original meaning of generosity or liberality), by distributing bread or money in large quantities in order to court public favor. For the rest they had to live on beggary. Such was life in classic antiquity. Life-long toil, oppression and woe on one side; sensual pleasure and unbridled passion on the other. What a contrast to Judea! There you find man's dignity as God's child recognized in the stranger, the

laborer, the slave, even in the foe and the criminal; woman esteemed as man's helpmate, as the builder of the home; purity and chastity made the foundation of domestic happiness; maternal feelings taken regard of, even in the dumb animal; life treasured as a sacred trust, whether in the old or the ailing; all possible respect shown to the workingman; laws given to provide for the sustenance of the poor, and charitable societies established in every town to take care of the helpless, the sick and the shelterless; the orphans well housed by private generosity; finally, the Sabbath day hailed everywhere as the hallowed harbinger of rest, comfort, elevation and instruction by all, high and low, servant and master.

Well could Philo at Alexandria and Josephus in Judea challenge the heathen to tell whether their mode of living matched the Jewish one. Indeed, those people know but little of real Judaism who find Jewish ethics circumscribed by the *letter* of the law which, by *way of compromise*, allowed and sanctioned for those barbarous times, polygamy, slavery, retaliation and cruel warfare. In order to know Jewish ethics, you must search after the *spirit* which dictated the law, which created the Bible, the Sabbath and Judaism in its entirety, aiming, indeed, at the realization of the lofty prophetical ideas which, in broadness, width and depth, eclipse every other ethical system. And this spirit penetrated Roman society as a leavening force, or, as Mommsen puts it, as "a power of decomposition," changing it from bottom to top. It was *not* the triune God of the late

church dogma, but the Jewish God; not the New Testament canonized no earlier than the third century, but the Jewish Holy Writ, the Old Testament, that wrought the change. Our civilization is Christian only in so far as the Church took the Decalogue, the Sabbath, the poor laws, the marriage laws, the whole work out of the hands of the Jews to put a narrower construction upon it, turning the great Messianic hope, the goal of humanity, into a dogma for an intolerant and exclusive sect.

Berthold Auerbach once said: "I am a Jew, in so far as I protest against Christianity." He would have done better, had he emphasized the positive side. Leaving dogma out of view, I may briefly state the difference between Jewish and Christian ethics to be this: The prophet says (Micah vi. 8), "Thou hast been told, Oh man, what is good, and what the Lord thy God requires of thee: the practice of righteousness, the love of kindness, and an humble walking with thy God." To put it into plain words: Be just, be kind, be humble by measuring yourself by what God, the highest ideal of perfection, demands. First comes justice. First do what is right. Offend none, encroach upon the rights of no one. Recognize and establish the rights of all fellow-beings. But this alone will not do. There is want; there is need of assistance, of sympathy. You must come to the rescue of the suffering and the helpless. You must help all. You must do more than you are bound to do by right. You must be kind. You must show brotherly love, compassion and piety to all. You must live for others, after

having provided for your own well-being. Finally, be humble. Be modest. However great and good you are, you fall short of what you might and ought to be. With all you are, do, or know, you are but little compared with the great Ruler of Life.

Now, the order of these three fundamental principles of Jewish ethics was simply inverted by Christianity. It said: First be humble, so humble as to no longer believe in your own reason, in your own strength to do good and to be good, unless you rely on the priest and the mediating savior. Then be kind; so kind as to offer him your right cheek who smites you on the left; so kind as to take all you have and give it to the poor; so kind as to love him who hurts you, even your enemy, who refuses to accept you as friend, however much you try to do him good. And for the rest, be just.

To be sure, on this principle no State can be built, no society established, no order and no law maintained. Consequently, the world, the life that now is, had to be handed over to the Power of Evil, to the enemy of God. A double code of morality sprang up: one for religion and another for life; one for the priests and monks and the Church, and another for the laity and the State; one concerning believers and another one concerning unbelievers. Love without religion finally led the Church to burn the bodies of heretics in order to save their souls; or to allow people to steal leather from the rich in order to give shoes to the poor. Morals and religion ran in opposite ways; and the more the unknown hereafter, the salvation in the next world was dwelt upon and

rendered the only object of human life, the more was the very soul and essence of morality perverted. For morality is nothing if not pure unselfishness, while religion often seemed to foster only refined, heart-hardened selfishness. Even the works of charity and love received the flavor of offensive narrowness and obtrusive fanaticism. Surely enough, man rose in opposition to such morality as soon as he began again to make use of his reason. He cried out for a power that would render him happy and cheerful rather than wretched and miserable. And this power appeared in the shape of worldliness, in the shape of comfort and pleasure, of commerce and industry, of art and science, chiefly, if not altogether, ushered into life by the Moor and the Jew.

With the Reformation the work of purification began, and morality was placed on a higher level. The Old Testament, thus long neglected, was unclasped and read anew. Step by step Christianity retreated from its old position and came nearer to the Jewish view of morality. The world's demands, the State, the people, the school and common life were recognized by religion, while the State, on the other hand, took charge of religious institutions like the Sabbath and others. God and Caesar no longer appeared as antagonistic, at least in free Protestant countries. Still, the right peace and harmony between religion and morals has not been established as yet. Christianity still overrules humanity. Christian love and charity are still far from being cosmopolitan and free from sectarian bias. In fact, the great philanthropists are found to stand outside of the Church.

The dominant sect has nowhere outgrown sectarianism in a manner to recognize the right of conscience, the claims of other opinions but those of the ruling sects and races. Religion and science have hardly begun to clasp hands. Church morals and Sunday morals still differ from common and everyday morals.

And again, humanitarian ethics takes little regard of religion, of the inner working of the soul. It measures the deed, but fails to weigh the motive, to judge and touch the inner springs of action. Yet can morality be complete and perfect without purity of heart and nobility of sentiment? Are the foundations of society sound and safe so long as the commands: "Thou shalt not steal!" "Thou shalt not commit adultery!" are not followed and supported by the command: "Thou shalt not covet?" What are justice and love without a holy and stern Judge and Lawgiver on high, watching the scales and shielding the pillars of life and holding all classes and sects and nations and individuals together by invisible and inseparable links? How can the equilibrium of humanity be maintained without humbleness before God, by which alone war and strife, wrong-doing and passion can be checked and kept at bay?

Here is the place for Judaism to step in and help human society in joining morality and religion anew. I hold that the Jew, with his broad philanthropy, his keen sense of justice, his sound, practical view of life, is destined to humanize religion and to religionize humanity. If to-day the vital element of Judaism seems to have all gone into the extremities, if the

hand and the brain do all the work of religion and the heart, the seat of devotion and reverential piety, remains cold and barren, it is probably for the reason that the Jew is called upon to interlink the different parts of humanity by his broadness and liberality of mind and heart. He is to reclaim humanity for his God, the only One. He is to point anew to the Decalogue, to the golden rule: Love God and love thy fellow-man; to the Jewish principles of ethics as the only stable and immutable groundwork of social happiness. He is to teach the world anew that religion does not mean to people the heaven with souls, but to render the earth the dwelling-place of the divine glory. He is to show that reason and knowledge, science and art, industry and commerce, all the various pursuits of man are but rounds in the ladder of perfection, leading up to God as the highest ideal and the only source of truth, justice, love and holiness; that all human types of perfection are but parts and signs of God's greatness, but no perfect and absolute ideals, or else they turn into idols which deprive man of his heaven-born nobility. He is to reassert and proclaim anew that religion, whose ethics takes full cognizance of all the demands of life, includes everything and excludes nothing that is noble and good and true in man, and is, therefore, the broadest and purest and safest of all moral systems.

Look into the cause of all the troubles, strifes, wars and crises which agitate human society at present, and you can trace it to some conflict between justice and love, between selfish claims and self-

surrender to law and duty; and only a religion which floods the entire sphere of life from center to circumference with the glow of morality, only the fear and love of a holy and good God can truly and finally solve them. Yet such a religion, such a God Judaism offers.

It is high time, indeed, for the Jew to open his eyes and see what a treasure Divine Providence has placed in his trust. It is high time for him to learn how to appreciate it, and to make the world appreciate it. Nor will the mere doctrine, the theory do. It must be carried abroad. It must become a life-power. It must be practiced. Of Abraham, our ancestor, we are told that, whensoever he tendered the hospitalities of his house to the needy and the strangers that passed by his tent, he would receive no thanks, but pointed to God on High who, after endowing him with His blessing, made him the steward of charity. And thus he won the heart of man for the religious truths he proclaimed. The modern Jew deserves all credit for his philanthropy and charity and cosmopolitan liberality. But he fails to point heavenward and acknowledge God as his Lord and Master. The Jewish home, Jewish virtue, piety and purity of life are no longer what they were in times of seclusion. How dare we hope to be teachers and models of ethics, so long as our aims are so low and our thoughts only bent on sensual pleasure and material gain; so long as we do not rise above the sphere of selfishness and spread the wings of our souls to soar up to the realm of the ideal and come within the magnetic reach of eternal truths? In other words, without religion?

But if certain signs deceive not, a reaction has set in, an earnest desire is felt of doing better. Well, may we not derive some encouragement from the Maccabean festival that is before our doors, which reminds us that one single Jew held forth the igniting spark to set the whole people ablaze with love and devotion for God, for the true and the good, so that one of the most glorious victories human history records has been won under the flag upon which, in letters of fire, the words were inscribed: *Mi Kamocha Ba Elim Adonay*—"Who among the mighty ones is like Thee, oh Lord!" So let us hope and trust that the Maccabean spirit is still alive in our midst, still kindling the lights and the fires of pure religion in the minds and hearts of the Jews to make the cause of truth, the Jewish faith, the Jewish God, Jewish ethics, win the victory over the world.

15.

ISRAEL'S MISSION IN THE WORLD.*

THE subject on which I propose to speak to you has become the Shibboleth of the parties in Jewry to-day. Strange to say, men who have never before been identified with the Synagog are acclaimed as mouth-pieces of Judaism while denying that the Jew has a religious mission. Under the caption of Nationalism, that ominous word which has plunged the whole civilized world into the most horrible of all wars in history, they want to turn us, who are happy and proud of our American citizenship, into a political nation and thus make us aliens in the land that has given us liberty and equal opportunity with all our fellow-citizens. Not satisfied with the colonization of a million or more of Jews in the Holy Land, which would be feasible and acceptable to all and sympathetic also to non-Jewish men of power and influence, these Zionists would deprive the Jew of his glorious diadem of priesthood and cast aside his crown of the Torah, which has ever been more precious to him than life itself, only to have him made the sole owner of a little territory and the builder of a little State such as is Serbia or Greece. As if this were the end and goal of Israel's unique history, and as if thereby the great Jewish Question, whether

*Address delivered at Temple Israel, Boston, Nov. 7, 1915.

from an economic or a historical point of view, could be solved! It seems to me that there can be no more timely nor more important subject for the rabbi to discuss, not in any polemical spirit but in a calm and reasonable manner, than Israel's mission in the world. In doing so, I take the word of the great seer of the Exile, the so-called second Isaiah, for my text: "The people that I have created for Me, shall relate My praise among the nations."

Believing with me, as I trust you all do, in the God of history, in an all-ruling Providence directing the destinies of nations, whom, by the way, the Zionist leader Nordau flatly denied in a book which appeared several years ago—we cannot but assume that the Jew has a divine mission, a world-task and a world-duty to fulfill in the world, or else he would have vanished from history long ago. As a matter of fact, as we behold design and purpose in creation, we must recognize in human history the working out of a higher plan in which each nation takes its part. Who can fail to see that Greece with her art and philosophy and Rome with her jurisprudence and statesmanship, or Egypt with her architecture and her hieroglyphic writings and Babylon with her astronomy and hoary wisdom, and so the various nations of the old, medieval and modern world, have each with their peculiar powers contributed their share to the ever-advancing civilization of the race in accordance with the plan comprising the whole history of mankind. There is however, a marked difference between all these and the chosen people of Israel. For in vain do we look for a vision or an

intuition on the part of any of these that they have actually received such a life-task or mission from on high. They all performed their work instinctively, unconsciously as does the bee in gathering its honey, or the silk-worm in spinning its delicate web for us. Only the Jewish people set out with a special call from heaven to go forth as a priest-people and as God's holy nation to win the world about for its truth; and the revelation they received on Sinai became a charge, a truth entrusted to their care for all generations to come. Thus is the story of Abraham their ancestor so written as to render him, as he wanders from land to land building altars to the God of heaven and earth and proclaiming His name among men, the prototype and pattern of a missionary, of a preacher and teacher of the monotheistic truth among the Gentiles. But especially when the sons of Judah had been carried away as captives from their own land to be dispersed all over the globe, there came to the seer of the Exile the wondrous message of God: "It is not enough for Me to restore the tribes of Jacob and reunite Israel. I shall make thee a light for the nations and a covenant interlinking the peoples. . . Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord." Here was announced for all time the unique destiny of the Jew.

Our mission is by no means to send forth men to convert the non-Jewish world into Jews. For us salvation is not conditioned on the acceptance of a creed. Judaism declares through its sages of the Talmud that the gates of eternal bliss are swung wide open to admit the righteous of all creeds or

races. "To do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God" is all that is required of man, says the prophet. The task which the God of history has assigned to us is to unfold and spread the light of the monotheistic truth in its undimmed splendor, ever to be living witnesses, and also to die, if needs be, as martyrs for the Only One and holy God, to strive and battle and also, if needs be, to suffer for the cause of truth, justice and righteousness, and thus to win the nations, the races and creeds, all classes of men by teaching and example, by a life of mental and moral endeavor as well as of incessant self-sacrifice and service for Israel's religious and ethical ideals.

Have you done so, or are you doing so?, asks the scoffer and detractor within and outside our camp. Well, we proudly point to our history which was throughout our whole past a continuous glorification and sanctification of God. We point to our matchless literature, the soul and essence of which is religious truth, without any peer and parallel in any other literature. We point above all to the Book of Books, which has become the household book of humanity and which is, even in its non-Jewish garb, flesh of our flesh and spirit of our spirit. The product of the Jewish genius, it has given the world its religion and its ethics and, as Matthew Arnold puts it, has created four-fifths of our whole culture! Yet Israel's monotheistic truth did not come full-panoplied from the brain of a Moses or from the heights of Sinai. It took centuries upon centuries to develop it, to elucidate and to spiritualize it. Only because the Jew came in touch with the civilizations of antiquity and the

various streams of thought and currents of ideas throughout the ages, his religion went through that process of growth which rendered it the ripest fruit of the human mind and the finest outcome of the human soul. Nor does the Bible or any other book of Jewry offer the truth in finite or absolute form. The whole literature of the Jew simply mirrors the effort of the Jewish mind and soul to attain an ever higher and loftier conception of God and man. Only a people that lives forever, passing from one stage of culture to the other, as did and does theJew, can claim to be the God-chosen prophet and expounder of the world's highest truth. God and the Jew are inseparable. Here lies the peculiar historical mission of the Jew. All the great nations that accomplished some great thing in history by their civilization, their philosophical or scientific systems of thought, rose like the orb of day until they reached the zenith of their power, and then they went down to disappear forever from the stage of life. Their fruit having been harvested in the storehouse of literature or art, there was no longer any cause for their existence. Not so Judaism. Its life was ever renewed and rejuvenated, like the ever waxing and waning moon, with which it is likened by the rabbis, because its spirit is perennial. The Jewish people is immortal, because it is ever linked with the God of life. The culture of the ages ever deepened and elevated its religious and ethical ideas and ideals. Surely the Greek, too, fondly loved the truth as a precious boon. But did he produce men filled with such a passionate love of truth that they would rather

die by the thousands and tens of thousands than surrender one iota of it, as did the Jewish people throughout the generations to this very day? Science certainly has its martyrs, too. But can they compare with the heroic martyrdom of the millions of Jews who mounted the funereal pile and bent their neck under the executioner's sword with the song of rejoicing on their lips at such sanctification of the name of their God? And should this mission of the Jew for his only One God die out at the very time when the world needs him most, nay, when the world is actually waiting for him to cleanse the truth of Sinai from the alloy, the falsehood with which it has been mixed by the ruling Church?

It was precisely the missionary spirit, the conviction of Israel's world-enlightening and world-conquering power which gave rise to the large propaganda work of the Jew at the time of the Hellenic culture, to which alone the Church and the Mosque owe their origin. And as late as the third century we hear one of the Talmudic sages utter the remarkable sentence: "Israel would not have been sent into the diaspora but for the purpose of making ever more proselytes among the heathen world." Of course, the medieval Ghetto life offered little chance to the Jew to make his sublime truth felt among the surrounding world, except by the unparalleled suffering and sacrifice he underwent on its behalf, and by the magnificent books his numerous sages sent forth to illumine the minds also of a few monks and prelates of an otherwise benighted Christendom. Only under the benign sceptre of Moorish and Spanish rulers Jews became

the torchbearers of science and philosophy, rousing Christian Europe from her medieval slumber, and preparing the world for the era of the Reformation. Small as their number was, they fulfilled in part the Jews' mission of truth.

To-day a new opportunity, and therewith a new task has come to the Jew. Behold, the thinking multitude is turning away more and more from the mythology of the Christian Trinity belief and from all the dogmas that militate against reason and common sense, craving for a faith which is in accord with reason and scientific research. Is this not the time for the Jew to exclaim with the seer of yore: "Arise, O light, and shine, and let the glory of God illumine anew the nations?" There is a saying of the rabbis that the very storm which cast down the idols of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, raised the dead of Israel's exile from the grave to new life. So did the very decline of Ghetto Judaism lift the spirit of our great Reform pioneers to a higher grasp of Israel's world-mission, and they beheld in the breaking down of the old religious life of the Jew the day-break of a new spiritual scope, the dawn of a new era of universalism for Jew and Judaism. Not a Jewish nationality re-established in Palestine, nor a revival of the Hebraic literature such as the Zionists plan, can purge the philosophy and theology of the Christian world of its errors and render the monotheistic faith of Israel the cementing link of mankind. Only in living and working in and with the world for his only One God and His truth, true and loyal to his sacred heritage, can the Jew achieve his mission of truth.

And there is another mission of light the Jew has to work for, and that is the mission for justice and righteousness. Look about you and listen to the teaching of the very best and noblest of men and women, or read the choicest of works to find out what is the soul and essence of their ethics. They will with one voice tell you, it is love. This is the New Testament view which emanated from a class of men that lived outside of the world, away from all political, industrial and social interests of life. It is still preached as the very substance of morality by men like Leo Tolstoi and others. As a matter of fact, these very teachings, far from having built society on firm and safe foundations, have sown hatred instead of love among men, because they ignored the true principle of all social and individual ethics upon which alone character as well as society rests, and that is justice.

Read the Torah and the Talmud, follow the battle the prophets waged against the haughty and tyrannical rich in defence of the poor and oppressed, what is it but the stern insistence upon the claim of right against might? "Justice is the cause of God," says the lawgiver, and behold his maxim, as the rabbis express it: "Let the mountain be pierced and shaken, if but the right prevail." And this is the soul of the Jew. He hungers and yearns for justice. From Abraham to the author of Job, from Amos and Isaiah to Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx there goes through the Jewish people the incessant cry for righteousness and justice in private and in public life. The whole religion of the Jew is beautifully summed up by

Matthew Arnold in the words: "The power, not ourselves that maketh for righteousness." What is to-day called and ever more emphatically insisted on, social justice and helpful scientific beneficence, is but part of the old Jewish Zedakah. If the poor, the laboring class, all those crushed and ground by the manipulations of the greedy men of wealth say to-day: "We do not want your charity; give us what is due to us! We no longer want the crumbs that fall from the table of the rich; we claim our share in the bounties God has given to all His children"—they simply voice the teachings of Judaism which claims for the feeble the help of the strong. You hear nowadays so much of altruism—that is, care for others, in opposition to egoism which is care for one's self. Noble as the virtue is, it is implied in the Golden Rule of the Mosaic Law pointed out as life's leading principle by Hillel and the Nazarene teacher. But it does by no means cover the whole of ethics. For after all, you dare not neglect yourself either. In order to be of service to others, you must endeavor to develop all the powers and faculties you possess to become a useful member of society. You must through struggle and trial acquire strength of character, self-reliance and independence in order to be able to help others. The morality of the Sermon on the Mount fails to build up human society such as it is constituted. You must with all your power resist evil and assert your own right as well as that of others, because justice is the foundation of God's throne, and without it the whole social structure totters and falls. Here, then, is the scope

and mission of the Jew. Not in an especial State of his own, but in the very midst of the nations among which he lives, must he, as he did under far less propitious conditions in former ages, battle for justice and righteousness as the true basis of social and private ethics, as the foundation of the world.

And finally there is the third mission for the Jew to accomplish, while living and working as fellow-citizen of the members of the various States and nations of the world, and this is to be the great factor of peace which is the crowning cupola of all human civilization. Did you ever ponder over the strange and puzzling fact that the lofty teachings of him whose birth was, according to the Gospels, hailed by the angels of God as the harbinger of "Glory to God on high, and Peace and Good will among men on earth," that the high ideals of the New Testament, so full of sympathy with suffering mankind, should have brought about discord and strife, hatred, bloodshed and war rather than harmony and peace among men and nations? The answer is: The words ascribed to the Nazarene preacher: "My kingdom is not of this world" lent the Christian religion that character of other-worldliness which gave the whole life of man a false meaning and direction. They made the millions of adherents of the Church look with contempt upon the life of State and society, upon industry, culture and science, and hunger only after heavenly salvation and bliss. They handed the things of this world over to Satan, and gave the whole earthly existence of man an entirely wrong aspect. They created a two-fold system of

ethics, one for the Church and one for the world, one for Sunday and another for working days, one for sacred and one for secular things. And it is against this view of religion and ethics that Judaism must ever protest anew, and insist on the holiness of the whole life, the holiness of duty everywhere on earth. Here is the Kingdom of God to be built up by man, not in a life beyond. And it cannot be denied that much of the decline of sound morality, much of the depravity, the corruption, the crime and vice that prevail in high and low places to-day, that the very cruelty and brutality that has brought mankind from civilization to a state of barbarism and savagery, is due to the religious crisis through which we are passing. The former generations were more or less held in restraint and kept on the path of virtue and piety by fear of hell and hope for heaven's bliss. All these threats and bribes are no longer of any avail, because the belief in a world of punishment and reward beyond the grave has been shaken. Man needs a higher and deeper ethical motive, and only a religion which makes holiness the aim of the soul, instead of salvation, can lift humanity to higher planes. Only a system of faith which teaches man to do the good, because it is good and godly, and shun evil, because it is evil and ungodly, only a disinterested service of God and man, emanating from the principle of life's holiness, will lead men back to virtue, to righteousness and goodness, to serene peace within and without. Yet such is the religion and ethics of Judaism. And where is the place for the Jew to teach and proclaim it as the true basis of man's brother-

hood? Surely not in the confines of the little territory of Palestine. Wherever the Jew lives, he must do his share to turn the earth into a mountain of God, the seat of righteousness and disinterested love. And at no time did he have such opportunity to again mount the watch-tower of prophecy and teach, by precept and practice, the ancient truth in the language of modern thought as to-day and in this glorious land of liberty, if he himself would but rise to the great emergency, and from a selfish materialist become again the idealist among the creeds and classes of men.

Surely the very catastrophe of our days points for him who can see beyond the surface of things, to a great transformation and regeneration of man, to the need of higher ideals. And who can tell what great things God has planned for the future! Surely out of this terrible deluge of blood and woe a new earth and a new heaven will rise. We sow in tears and shall reap in joy. Selfish materialism and narrow nationalism have plunged the world into this calamitous war. We need a mighty spiritual force to lift us to true idealism. Will the Jew in this free and God-blessed soil not awaken to the realization of his glorious mission?

To America the Jews all over the world look for help and for inspiration. America's Jews shall shape the destiny of the Jew the world over. So let us take a broad outlook upon life as American Jews and American patriots, and work for a humanity re-established and reunited upon the divine principles of truth, justice and peace. Amen.

16.

THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN RESEARCH.*

RELIGION is not the same as theology. Religion is a godly life; theology is a great battle-arena with an armory full of weapons, rude and polished, of all the ages. When seeing two persons engaged in a fierce strife, people go out of the way. So they do in regard to theological questions. They prefer neutral grounds. Still, it will not do to remain unconcerned and indifferent when the object of the strife is of vital importance. Every person that lays claim to education, still more the Jew, of whatever view and shade of opinion he be, ought to have a clear conception of: *What the Bible is, or should be in the light of modern research.*

Of all the nations that held dominion over the earth, of all the conquerors that ruled the destinies of man, none exerted such extensive power and enduring influence on all ages as did the Jewish people through the Bible. Before its irresistible sway Bel and Osiris, the gods of Olympus and of Asaheim, disappeared to let Jahveh, Israel's Only One, reign, "from the rising of the sun unto its setting." The memories of Hercules and Siegfried faded before the lustre of Abraham and David. And what do

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the literatures, the arts, and sciences of the various nations weigh in the scale against the Hebrew Book? Forcing its way into every household, hut or palace, it became the companion of the forsaken, the comforter of the distressed, the staff of the feeble, the inspiration of the great, and the illumination of the wise. It has formed our morals, built our States, framed our social life, and shaped our thoughts. It remoulded humanity amidst the downbreak of ancient civilization, and cradled and nursed all the modern nations of Europe. The Bible, wrested from the Church, gave Germany its intellectual, England its political spirit of independence. It created our American Republic. In token of loyalty to our commonwealth, do our Presidents press their lips upon this Book when assuming their high office. Nor did the great leaders of modern thought, Lessing and Goethe, Carlyle and Huxley, even the sceptic Heine, hesitate, in various strains of eulogy, to call it the great and unique Book, the educator of humanity. You may as well attempt to drive the sun out of our planet as divest our entire culture of the influences of this book from Judea.

And need I dwell particularly on what the Bible is to the Jews? It was our ark of the covenant that led us through wide deserts and over roaring seas. It was our banner of victory that decided our battles with the world, our fountain of living waters in the dry lands, our safeguard and elixir of life that rescued us from a thousandfold death, the source of truth from which all the intellects of the ages drew inspiration and light.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, we see this Sacred Book, the friend, the guide, the comforter of mankind for the last two thousand years, sneered at by our so-called enlightened ones to-day. How can we account for this strange phenomenon?

My friends, the explanation seems easy to find. Love often turns into hatred when strained beyond measure. Both love and hatred are blind, the one to the faults, the other to the virtues of their object. Therefore disappointment leads from one extreme to the other. This is exactly what happened with the Bible. From gratitude for what it offered, people made of it an idol, a fetich. While regarding it as *the* Book of God, they not only derived from it their geology and astronomy and history, for many centuries to impede the progress of science, but they read into it all their follies and falsehoods, so that there was hardly a crime or a cruelty which was not sanctioned with its divine authority. The burning of heretics and witches and all the deviltry perpetrated by the Church, looked to the Hebrew Code for justification; just as did slavery and polygamy in our day. Child-like fables portraying the paradisiacal home of the first man, and Oriental figures of speech picturing the coming kingdom of peace were twisted into ropes, forged into shackles, to enslave man and enchain his reason and common-sense. And though the Jew was spared the iron strait-jacket of dogmatic belief, though his reason remained unfettered, in spite of the weird superstitions which from all lands and ages had crept into his mind, the law which he was bound to obey became a heavy and oppressive

yoke, nevertheless. True, it shielded and guarded him against the vices and passions swaying the world around him, but it also barred him out of any friendly intercourse with humanity at large. It kept him in slavish subjection and in unwholesome seclusion.

At last, fretting and chafing under the despotic dominion of this Book, man with the torch of inquiry in hand, began to expose its errors, its contradictions, its often false notions and assumptions about God and nature. Like the slave rejoicing at the breaking of his chains, he gloried in finding the hitherto infallible Bible faulty; and casting it down from its presumptuous high seat, he contrasted it with the true Book of Divine Revelation, with God's handwriting in the stars and the rocks, upon the hearts and conscience of man. Thus the spell was broken, and the Book lay in fragments before him, like the two tablets of the law at the feet of Moses. Condemn not iconoclasts like Diderot, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine. Though they abused the Bible, they meant well with man and his divine freedom. Their ridicule emancipated the race from the thraldom of the book. Still, neither abuse by the one nor misuse by the other, led to a true appreciation, or correct view of the Bible. A new era of research dawned, the century of Darwin. People commenced to re-read the world's history. The Napoleonic expedition to Egypt at once opened the horizon of man. Just as the little planet earth was swung off the world's center by the discovery of Copernicus, so were the Biblical records about the remote past eclipsed by the far older and more glorious civilization

on the Nile and the Euphrates, now restored to light. Homer was shown to be the work, not of one man, but of ages. The older history of Rome and Greece proved to be a series of legends. Gradually India, Persia, and China yielded up their long-hidden treasures of literature, art, and religion, and then the Bible appeared in an altogether new light. The same legends about creation, paradise, and the flood here as there; the same rites and practices here as there; the same holy books existing here as there, and the same modes of treating and using them also. And, once examined like any other human writing, under the microscope of critical analysis, the Bible turned out to be not a book dictated by God to Moses and David and Solomon and the few known prophets, but the slow and steady growth of a nation's intellectual life-work, the outcome of toiling centuries groping after light and truth, justice and comfort and peace. Instead of seeing in the Pentateuch the legacy of the one great law-giver Moses, we learn from the many contradictory views and discrepancies found in the records and the statutes, that many historians and priestly legislators must have been at work, augmenting and improving the written, or unwritten, laws bearing the name of Moses, before Ezra, the priestly scribe, could present it to the new colony of Judea as the foundation-stone of the Jewish commonwealth. Instead of taking the Psalms to be the composition of the great warrior-king David, their intrinsic character proved that the sacred music of that undying hymn-book of the nations could not have struck the chord of the Jewish

heart, ere the weepings of the exiled had elicited from David's harp the elevating strains of comfort. Likewise was the name of King Solomon, renowned for wisdom, used only to reflect credit on the literary productions of the Jewish schools of the wise. As chief representatives, however, of the Jewish genius, as the true heralds and founders of the Jewish religion loomed up, not Abraham and Moses, around whose brows latter ages wove the aureola of glory reflected from the full mid-day sun that had risen on Zion, but the lofty seers of Judea who, standing forth like high mountain peaks which herald the light, were the first, with tongues of fire striking the ages, to proclaim religion to be good conduct, righteousness, and mercy.

Of course, this view, which makes of the Bible a successive composition and compilation by schools rather than one single or several inspired books, contradicts all theories of the past. It is denounced by the orthodox of both Church and Synagogue as an awful heresy. For it presents the truth as growing and rising from earth-born man rather than as handed down, complete and perfect, from heaven. It seems to do away with Revelation and put Evolution in its stead.

Of course, the question presses for an answer: Can Judaism be reconciled with this view? May any one holding such views—and I would in all likelihood not breathe the free air of America to-day, had I not many years ago been one of the first to publicly voice them—still speak in the name and with the authority of Judaism?

I shall not refer here to the great master-minds and highest authorities of Judaism, such as Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, and Gersonides, who did not believe in supernatural revelation either; who discarded the miracle stories in the Bible, being, in fact, the first critics and rationalists. I maintain that only this liberal view of the Bible offers the broad and solid foundation to that religion of humanity, of which Reform Judaism is the exponent.

Standing among the great Alpine mountains, you can hardly recognize the difference between mighty giant-mountains, like Mont Blanc and the Jungfrau, and the others. They all appear alike, when near to you. But glance at them from the distance, and you will soon find the one over-towering all the rest. Placed among the various Holy Books, the Bible appears to resemble now one and then another. But look at it through the vista of the ages, and you will see how they are all dwarfed by its colossal grandeur. The Bible is holy, *not because it is inspired, but because, and in so far as it does still, inspire.* It is not true, because God has spoken the word, but because in the truth, the comfort, the hope, the final victory of justice which it holds out, you hear God speak to you in soul stirring strains. "Whatever finds me," says Coleridge, "bears witness of itself that it has proceeded from the Holy Spirit." No book in the world enraptures the heart, responding to the innermost needs of the soul so much as does—of course, only in certain parts—this venerable Bible. Compare it with other writings and see whether it did not give virtue a finer mould, morality

a deeper ring and resonance. In commanding "Be holy as your God is holy," it placed a ladder of perfection before man, bidding him rise from one round to another and higher one, until the uppermost top will be reached, on which the highest ideal of all that is good and true is seen. What matters it if all the symbolic rites, appearing no longer as available helps and lifts, are cast aside? We need no crutches as soon as we are able to walk upright and straight in the presence of the Eternal. What of it, if all the Biblical life-pictures have ceased to be perfect models? Standing on their shoulders, we must needs strive for higher ideals. And if all the Biblical tales about reward and punishment, all the threats and bribes, have lost their hold upon us, the consciousness of the Divine within us ought all the more bring us within the magnetic sweep of divine principles, of eternal truths. Not as a leaden weight to keep us down, but as a wing with which to soar up, not as a bar to shut man out of heaven, but as a gate to open heaven's freedom and bliss for him, do we want to use the Bible. It must be read in the light of its own history. Its characters, its laws, its legends, its poetry and history must be judged by the standard of their age, not by ours, which, owing to the Bible's influence, is a far higher one. The Bible is not a book understood by the average reader without the help of students or commentaries. It must be used *with wise discretion.*

It is no work written or dictated by God. Were it such a one, we could not accept it as holy with its often crude notions and harsh sentiments of hatred,

revenge, and passion, which are anything but divine. Quite different it is, if, taking the spirit instead of the letter, we see through its medium the heroes of yore, an Abraham, a Moses, and an Isaiah, wrestling like Jacob with God all through the night, until a new day dawns upon their minds; if we behold those seers of old climbing up the mount of vision, until they have reached the sun-lit summit of a lofty religious perception. Just as before the growing intellect of the child, sun, sky, and ocean expand, so we find the idea of God growing and expanding, until His glory surpasses the heavens.

Yes, God did descend to the hill-top of Sinai wrapped in smoke and fire, yea, betraying human passion and frailty, but only to lift man up to ever higher regions of thought, His all-consuming fire, brightening into a sun of righteousness, before which wickedness vanishes like mist, and His wrathful frown changing into the serene smile of paternal love and compassion. The very greatness of the Bible consists in that it does not offer a mere philosophical God, but a God living within man and ever rising before him. Its gold is not coined into creeds, but is still, with all the dross and the quartz, imbedded in the mine; its water of life not presented in pitchers and cups, but pouring forth from the perennial fountains of the heart. The forms of worship prescribed, the laws given there, are not the same throughout the Book; they are changing, shifting, and constantly improving, thus showing that all rites and ceremonies must change; that just as nature renews its garb from year to year, so must religion,

in order to remain vigorous and full of vitality, be in a constant state of progress and evolution.

And finally, while all other books and literatures represent but parts and fragments of man's history, the Bible opens before us the great panorama of *universal history*. Watching the waves and tides of the sea, we are apt to behold in them a mere play of chance, until we learn the law which bids the moon sway the tidal march of the rolling ocean with its constant ebb and flow. The existence of this law in history which makes the tidal waves of God's justice and love sweep over individuals and nations in never-faltering might, was first proclaimed by the Hebrew seers. They first pointed to those slowly but steadily working mills of God, which separate the chaff from the wheat. They disclosed the magnificent chariot of God securing victory to all that is good and true, and crushing under its wheels all that is hollow and worthless. Thus history became the great refiner and educator of the race, culminating in the lofty Messianic goal, in the great consummation of humanity, when all lands and streams of culture will offer their gift upon the altar of the Most High, whose truth and love are mirrored everywhere, as the sun is in the ocean and the dew-drop.

What the Darwins of Chaldea four thousand years ago discovered while gazing upon nature's work, says Renan, the Jewish sages have embodied in the first chapters of the Bible. And will not the disclosures of those geniuses who, after another four thousand years, may illumine mankind, still harmonize with the bright hopes and great truths offered by the

Bible? Two great nations have reared the pillars of civilization: the Greeks with their Midas-hand turned the bequest of Chaldea and Phenicia into the gold of art and science; the Jews, with the flame of their divine inspiration, moulded the past into an ideal of holiness and perfection. Ought we not, as the guardians of the Book, preserve and cultivate the spirit which has kept and enlivened the Bible, the spirit of freedom, of progress, and of enlightenment? And if the Bible of Humanity in the future will be large enough to have room for all that is inspiring and ennobling, cheering and elevating in all the literatures and arts of the nations, men will yet with our Whittier sing:

> We search the world for truth; we cull
> The good, the pure, the beautiful
> From graven stone, and written scroll,
> From the old flower-field of the soul;
> And weary seekers of the best,
> We come back laden to our quest,
> To find that all the sages said
> Is in the Book our mothers read.

17

THE WANDERING JEW.*

IF WE believe the old medieval legend, the Wandering Jew is a luckless fugitive, with a haggard, weather-beaten face, a tall, emaciated figure, and dishevelled hair, clothed in rags, bare-footed, having nothing but his knotty staff to lean on, the very image of misery and despondency. He has long ceased smiling. He can only sigh. He has a strange story to tell of human folly and cruelty; for he has traversed the wide globe, seen every land and chronicled the events of each age. He witnessed the downfall of Jerusalem, the ruin of the Roman empire. He beheld the Church in her rise and her decline; Islamism in its zenith and its defeat. He saw generations as they came and went, civilizations as they sprang up and vanished, kingdoms and empires as they appeared and disappeared. He stood at the cradle of so many nations only to shed a tear over their graves. He saw all enter life and die; do their work and then go to their rest. He alone is not permitted to find a respite. To wander from place to place, and from one country to another, without rest for his weary foot, is his doom. And why? Poor man! He does not seem to remember that event quite distinctly. When seen by an Armenian bishop

*Sunday Discourse, delivered at Temple Beth El, New York, April 1, 1888.

in the East in the beginning of the XIII. century, he said that his name was Cartaphilus ("the much-beloved"), and having been doorkeeper of Pontius Pilate, he struck Jesus on the neck as he passed on to the cross, telling him to go quicker, whereupon Jesus cursed him, saying: "I shall go, but thou shalt remain waiting till I come back." But, three hundred years later, when first sighted in European countries, in Hamburg, London, and elsewhere, he gave his name as Ahasuerus, and his story ran differently. A shoemaker by profession, he stood at the doorway when Jesus, with the heavy cross on his shoulder, wanted to rest in front of his house, and he pushed him forward, ordering him to hasten on; whereupon Jesus looked sternly at him, saying: "I shall stand here and rest, but thou shalt move on forever until doomsday." At another time he appeared under still another name. But there is no need of dwelling longer on the mere frame of the legend. Suffice it to say that the Wandering Jew became one of the most popular figures of European folk-lore. Inquiries tell us that the old Teutonic god of storm and wind, surviving under the name of the Wild Huntsman, has been frequently identified with our hero. Strange indeed, that in hunting the Jew, the German hunted his old god, who had to die in order to lend new force to the never-dying Jew. But the source of the legend can be traced still farther east. The Arabian Jews in Mohammed's time spoke of a cursed Samaritan who was doomed to roam about like a beast of the forest, without rest, because he formed the golden calf for Aaron. Many such Cain-like fugitives

exist in Eastern folk-lore. Yet, perhaps, the original type of the Wandering Jew was not an accursed man, but the great world-traverser Elijah, the prophet who was spared death in order to be the forerunner of the expected Messiah. He, according to Jewish belief, still appears from time to time on earth in the shape of an old man deeply interested in the progress of humanity. He lives under the name of the deathless Chidr among the Moslems, and as St. John "the Beloved One" among Christians in the East.

But in the Christian mind the restless wanderer became the personification of the Jewish race. The strange fate of that wondrous people, who, defying fire and sword, and braving all the storms and furies of the people's passion, driven from land to land, weighed down by the curse of the nations, still continued to march on with unabated vigor, an object of pity, yet unyielding, uncompromising, unconquerable in its determination to kneel before no savior but its Only One God, could not but puzzle and perplex Christianity. For what will become of the promised second coming of its Messiah, as long as the Jews refuse to recognize him as king? This fact alone explains why so cruel an injustice, as to have him inflict so terrible a curse upon a man for so slight an offense, was ascribed to the otherwise tender-hearted teacher of Nazareth. Christ and the Wandering Jew, however, stand here as the representatives of the two creeds in their implacable hostility. But, thank God, what was intended to be a caricature of the Jew, is to-day his glorification. I

trust, Christianity itself is to-day ashamed of the awful curse flung at the martyr-race, and no longer extols its crucified God by crucifying the Jews. Likewise is the grotesque figure of the Wandering Jew, through the magic spell of the modern genius of poetry, through Goethe and Shelley, transformed into a grand Prometheus-like type of wandering and struggling humanity. All the more should we feel induced to read the history of the past in the light of the day, not as Longfellow, when speaking of the Jews, says:

> "Spelling it backward like a Hebrew book,
> Till life became a Legend of the Dead,"

but rather in a sense which imbues the Legend of the Dead with the spirit of life.

Yes, the Jew has all along been an unsteady wanderer on earth, but not like Cain with the mark of bloody guilt on his forehead, but like Abraham, his ancestor, commissioned by God to bestow blessing, both materially and spiritually, upon all families of man. True enough, there is something about the history of the Jewish people which seems to place them outside of the law governing the life of others. Their endurance and elasticity, their powers of resistance and tenacity appear to be without parallel. Greek mythology speaks of a hero for whom his mother obtained the boon of immortal life, but, having forgotten to pray also for his immortal youth, she saw him shrivel and dwindle into a size which made his sight more repulsive than death. For without continual regeneration, everlasting life becomes a burden and a curse. This is not the case

with the Jew. He was privileged to drink ever anew from the fountain of youth. His history is a perpetual rejuvenation, an oft-repeated, phoenix-like resurrection from the grave. This is due to his twofold nature. Like man among the animated beings, he among the nations leads a double life, animal and divine, combining two forces, a material and a spiritual, a national and a cosmopolitan idea of man. Israel has often been likened to the stars, also wanderers along the expanse of heaven. Some of them lead, so to say, a vagabond life, and by their eccentric ways appear like disturbers of the order of the solar system. Such are the comets dreaded by the people and hardly reckoned among the stars. Yet they, too, wheel around the same luminous center in their solitary track along the sky. Thus does "the star of Jacob," "in its solitude not counted among the nations," swing around the bright orb of humanity while pursuing a different course from the others. The Jew's history is the world's history in miniature. All streams of culture meet on his path. His treasury of knowledge is full of the best wisdom of all the nations. Like the bee, he alone has been busy in gathering honey from every flower in the garden of culture.

Watch his childhood. See how he listened to the rather dull fables of old Chaldea, soon to coin them into grand moral truths about the world's beginnings. He did not care to have Egypt's hieroglyphics read and her sphinxes' riddles solved, but, pervaded by sound reason and common sense, he made his God on Sinai hurl forth His most terrific thunders against

her caste despotism, and flash forth His lightnings against her worship of brutes and her oppression of man. He craved for liberty as man's highest boon. He went forth to see humanity free and simple. He spent his youth in Palestine. There he became an apprentice to Phoenician art and culture. But he was not granted a long career as a peaceful farmer. His land was too near the great theater of war between the world's mighty empires; he was dragged into the bloody strife, his land was seized as spoil. All the louder he raised his voice against injustice and tyranny. Pointing to a higher rule of righteousness, he ascended the world's pulpit to preach the judgment day of the Lord of Hosts, in whose hands Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt are but rods of chastisement, and threshing-flails to separate the chaff from the wheat. What mattered it to him if the coming storm, destined to smite all the nations of antiquity, should also strike his tree, if but the root and a single branch remain to witness that God ruleth?

The Babylonian exile became his high-school of trials. There he prepared himself for his grand, historical task. If he lost his land, he learned to render the wide world his home. His Hebrew nationality found an early grave, but the cosmopolitan Jew was cradled and nursed. Kaulbach, in his famous painting "The Destruction of Jerusalem," represents the "Wandering Jew" as starting forth from the ruins a shattered man overwhelmed with anguish, deprived of hope, with a lacerated heart, down-cast with a sorrow for which there is no relief, while in the back-

ground of that picture of woe and desolation Christianity enters in the white garb of innocence with its flag unfurled, shouting victory and triumph. This is the Christian construction of history, but the facts contradict it. Six centuries before the fall of the second temple, the Jew had started upon his journey throughout the lands. He had served in the highest positions at Babylonian, Persian, and Egyptian courts, like Joseph of yore. He had won laurels in the battle-fields, while fighting under Alexander the Great and under the Ptolemies; he had tilled their soil and extended their commerce and industry. The whole African and Asiatic coast of the Mediterranean sea was dotted with Jewish settlements, from all of which the sublime truths of a common father and a common brotherhood of man were issued forth, long before Christianity had appeared on the stage. Kingdoms in the far East and in the distant South had been converted to Judaism, scattering the seeds which afterwards yielded such unexpected harvests to both the Church and the Mosque. The Wandering Jew had followed in the wake of King Cyrus of Persia, and of Alexander the Macedonian conqueror, to blend Occidental and Oriental ideas and habits of life. Jewish intellects built the bridge between Hellenic wisdom and Oriental thought through which the entire medieval world had to pass.

And after the Roman soldier had thrown the firebrand into the Jewish temple, could not the Wandering Jew point to his house of learning and with the Greek sage say: "I carry all my possessions with me?" He possessed mankind's holiest treasure, the Book

of Books, translated into every tongue, and brightened up by the gems of the best philosophies of the nations. Look to Persia, Arabia, and Asia Minor. Have those princes and knights, those grandees and courtiers, those astronomers and physicians, those lofty poets and wealthy rulers of the money-mart the look of despair and cowardice about them? And then follow the march of civilization westward under the sway of Islamism, and see who is in the van. Who does, like Joseph did in Egypt, store up, in the times of plenty, the treasures of philosophy, science, and popular wisdom to distribute them to the Christian nations in the days of spiritual famine? Whose counsel saves the European world from lapsing into utter barbarism? In the entire commercial, literary and political intercourse of nations, the Wandering Jew was the mediator, the pioneer of civilization. When Columbus or Vasco da Gama went forth in search of new lands and continents, or when Kepler looked out for new worlds on the firmament, they were assisted by the Wandering Jew. And again when Italy gave rise to the Renaissance, and Germany to the Reformation, he stood there with the torch of enlightenment to kindle research and nurture the spirit of awakening humanity.

Only when for most of the modern nations the dark night of mediaevalism seemed to be well-nigh past and a new day was first heralded in Italy and then in Holland, only for the last three or four hundred years, the Wandering Jew fell asleep, being fatigued and exhausted from his long, thorny path. Into his gloomy Ghetto the new day was slow to

enter. But he did not sleep long. As soon as the new morn was announced by Mendelssohn and Lessing, at the trumpet blasts of liberty proclaimed in France and America, he rose with delight to drink in the light of freedom and hail the blessings of progress. See him now standing in the front ranks among the champions of liberty against oppression, of justice against intolerance, of cosmopolitan love and charity against narrow seclusiveness. In every land and zone you find him to-day holding the highest posts of honor in law and politics, reflecting glory upon his country and profession in every field of honorable labor. He challenges his fellow-citizens by his social virtues no less than by his enterprise and success. Thank God, he is no longer hunted, no longer the curse-laden fugitive. He is recognized as a man and as a citizen. He has found rest, a sweet home of liberty, and nowhere so as in our blessed land. Well, then, has he reached his goal? Why does he not then cast off the Jewish cloak, his storm-beaten mantle, and amalgamate with the nations around him? Why not drop his peculiarities, the name of Jew, and become citizen of the wide world?

My friends! If the Wandering Jew has come to stay, humanity has not. Mankind is wandering and moving onward and forward from station to station, and the Jew, the suffering Messiah of former ages, must still lead to see his humanity's cause triumph. For the humanity we look for is not a mere visionary cosmopolitism, a religion without God, a morality without religion, but the great harvest of human history, the consummate growth of all the divine

seeds of the good, the true and the beautiful, the kingdom of God on earth realized. History will yet have many ascents and descents of man, many empires and systems of religion and philosophy rising and setting like the sun, while Judaism will wax and wane with ever renewed vigor like the moon. No. The Wandering Jew dares not drop his priestly robe nor sell his birth-right for a pottage of lentils. His master is not the spirit of the age, but the everlasting Spirit of all the Ages. His fount of youth is mankind's fountain of life. The true leader must be the first in storming the heights, but the last in leaving the battle-field. The world's battles for the right and the true have not been fought and decided as yet. Mankind still needs our service; God still counts upon Abraham's seed. Yes, Elijah is the prototype of the Wandering Jew, that is, as herald of the great Messianic time. For our Messiah has not come, but is carried along in the arms of centuries by all the advancing arts, sciences and ideals of man. Genius of mankind is his name. Peace is his scepter, righteousness his shield, truth his chariot and his golden diadem, reflecting the majesty of God on high, is love. Yet, as long as God is not enthroned as Father of Righteousness and Love in the hearts of all nations and sects, so long thy task, O Wandering Jew, is not fulfilled. Falter not. With the ark of covenant upon thy shoulders, thou art to lead mankind to Zion's heights, and, like the priests on Jordan's shore, thou must wait till the last of thy brethren has entered the land of promise, of a humanity united by thy God of truth, of justice and of peace. Amen.

18.

AMERICAN JUDAISM.*

AS REPRESENTED BY THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS AND THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE.

"*Nedibe Am Neesafu Am Elohe Abraham*—The princes of the people are gathered together, the representatives of the people of the God of Abraham."

IT IS a great privilege to address this distinguished assembly, representing the great body of progressive American Israel throughout the length and breadth of this glorious land, in this metropolis which holds in its midst a larger Jewish population than was held in the holy city of Jerusalem or in Alexandria in their most prosperous days, and speak on what must be of the highest and deepest concern to all of us, on American Judaism as it is represented by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and as it is expounded and held up as a banner of light and victory by the Hebrew Union College. Oh, when I think of what Judaism meant to our fathers when, within the gloomy Ghetto walls, amidst unparalleled woe and in the face of cruelest persecution by fanatics and death-dealing mobs, they went

*Address before the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Jan. 18, 1911.

each morning to the synagogue to proudly proclaim the unity of God in the Sh'ma Yisrael, and declare their readiness to offer their life and all they had for the glorification of the Most High, while reciting the benediction, "Blessed be the Lord, whose name is to be sanctified before the great world;" and when I compare therewith what Judaism means to us, who live in amity and concord with all our fellow-citizens round about, enjoying the same rights and privileges, and finding all avenues and opportunities to success and station, to power, honor and influence open to each as the peer and equal of all, and yet stand up with heart and soul, with might and main, with burning zeal and glowing enthusiasm for the ancient faith, to the potency and vitality of which our magnificent temples and our glorious institutions of philanthropy and education all over the country give loud and unequivocal testimony; and when I further consider what is being done by American Israel for the suffering and struggling, the storm-tossed and fury-lashed Jew of other lands and climes, then American Judaism, the soul and spiritual essence of American Jewry, appears to me to be a theme so grand and rich, so bright in outlook, and so suggestive of hope and unlimited potentialities, that the pen quivers and the tongue falters in the endeavor to do it justice.

Ever since I was privileged to imbibe the invigorating air of this God-blessed land of liberty, American Israel appeared to me as a new type of Joseph, "the prince among his brethren," whom Divine Providence entrusted with the mission of not merely

preserving the *lives* of the tens of thousands who come to seek bread and shelter under the starry banner, but of reviving the *spirit* of God's chosen people, and of endowing them with new hope and a wider outlook, with a deeper comprehension of their prophetic vision and their world-duty. I do not wonder at the story that the simple sons of Jacob, the shepherd sheikh of Canaan, were so awe-struck at the sight of the gigantic palaces and the colossal temples and obelisks in the strange wonderland of Egypt that they failed to recognize their brother Joseph in his royal garb and glory who had become a thorough Egyptian in speech and manner, and that they would not trust him, even after he had assured them of his love and loyalty as brother and kinsman. Neither do I wonder if our Russian or Roumanian brethren, brought up under the humiliating conditions and widely different religious views and influences of their benighted country, harbor a certain mistrust of us, when they see our majestic houses of worship and our educational and philanthropic structures reared after, and maintained by altogether different methods. In their bewilderment they fail to recognize that in blending Americanism with Judaism we have, like Joseph of yore, stored up the treasures of life for *their* children as well as for *ours*; that in changing or modifying the *form*, we have been preserving and guarding the *faith* far better than did our brethren in Europe, who are being confronted with the peril of spiritual starvation, and whose children sell their Jewish birthright by the thousands for a mess of pottage, for political or

social recognition and promotion. No, we who rally under the banner of progressive American Judaism are not behind our conservative brethren in loyalty to, and in love for, our sacred heritage. In fact, love for the truth, for which our fathers died, bade our Reform pioneers liberate it from the prison-house of *Shulhan Aruk* legalism, in order to render it a source of life again for us and those who come after us. Loyalty to our wondrous past prompted our heroic leaders in this free land to so regenerate Judaism as to make it a beacon light for the living and a fountain of hope for all the future.

For what is American Judaism, and for what does it stand? The very name has been challenged by those who assert that there is, and there should be, but *one* Judaism, Catholic Judaism, as they choose to call it, pointing to the traditional law, the Halakah, as the impregnable fortress and foundation of united Israel. As if this very law, with its diverse codes, as if this very Judaism of the centuries, was not the product of various lands and civilizations. Whether Palestinian or Babylonian, Alexandrian or Persian, Polish or Portuguese, medieval or modern, Judaism at all times received its peculiar traits, views and forms from its environments, which either broadened it or rendered it narrow and clannish. In the bright sunshine of Persian, Hellenic and Arabic culture it expanded in scope and vision to become a cosmopolitan power, giving rise to new systems of thought and higher conceptions and ideals of life. In the dreary Russian or medieval Ghetto its growth became stunted, and it deteriorated into a system of hair-

splitting casuistry and superstition. True, there was wondrous sweetness and brightness behind those Ghetto walls. As the tossing billows of the ocean, built out of the very slime, cast forth by the oyster the thick shell that protects its tiny life, so did the floods of persecution and oppression render Talmudic legalism an armor of protection around Judaism to keep it intact. But how about the life when the shell opens? The wall had to give way before the trumpet blast of liberty, in order that Judaism might again thrive and rise to its full stature.

There is no room for Ghetto Judaism in America. Look at any of the creeds and churches in our free land! They are all more tolerant, more liberal, more humane and sympathetic in their mutual relations than those in Europe. Our free institutions, our common school education, our enlightening press and pulpit, with their appeal to common sense, enlarge the mental and social horizon and render progress the guiding maxim. Least of all could Judaism retain its medieval garb, its alien form, its seclusiveness, in a country that rolled off the shame and the taunt of the centuries from the shoulders of the wandering Jew, to place him, the former Pariah of the nations, alongside of the highest and the best, according to his worth and merit as *man*, and among a people that adopted the very principles of justice and human dignity proclaimed by Israel's lawgivers and prophets, and made them the foundation stones of their commonwealth. No, American Judaism must step forth, the equal of any church in broadness of view and largeness of scope, as a living truth, as an

inspiring message to the new humanity that is now in the making, not as a mere memory of the past and a piece of Orientalism in the midst of vigorous, forward-pressing Occidental civilization.

American Judaism! What a power of inspiration lies in these two words! They spell the triumph of the world's two greatest principles and ideals, the consummation of mankind's choicest possessions, the one offered by the oldest, the other by the youngest of the great nations of history, the highest moral and spiritual and the highest political and social aim of humanity; the God of righteousness and holiness to unite and uplift all men and nations, and the Magna Charta of liberty and human equality to endow each individual with God-like sovereignty. Behold America, the land of the future! When the sun sets on the western horizon of Europe, its effulgent rays gild the hills that herald the dawn to the new world. The land of promise for all the persecuted! God hid it, as it were, in His treasure-house to reserve it for the most glorious chapter of human history, when out of the mingling of races and sects, nay, out of the boldest, the most courageous and most independent elements of society, a new, a stronger, healthier and happier type of men and women should emerge, able to cope successfully with the hardships and problems of life, and bring the world nearer to the realization of its highest and holiest dreams and ideals, social, political and religious. And behold Judaism leaving the ark, because the flood of unrighteousness, of cruelty and inhumanity has ceased, and looking out upon a new earth and a new heaven,

wherein justice, liberty and peace reign in fulfillment of its seer's visions. Was not the cry "Land! Land!" that resounded on Columbus' ship, the opening up of a new future for the martyr-race at the very time, when its woe and misery had reached their culmination in the land it had enriched by its own toil? Then the voice of God was heard speaking to the fugitive Spanish Jew, as He afterward spoke to the German, the Galician and the Russian Jew: "Go forth and be a blessing to the multitudes of people, and a light to the many nations and classes that settle in the new hemisphere." Yet the call was only gradually heard. The God of the fathers was not forgotten, but life's pressing demands made ever new inroads upon religion. The continued disregard of the ceremonial, the dietary and the Sabbath laws amid the strife and struggle for bare existence weakened the faith and blighted the self-respect of many, to fill their souls with despondency or religious apathy. Of what avail was the praying and yearning for the glory of a world that has gone? As the winter's snow before the approaching sun of spring, so seemed the ancient creed to melt away under the genial rays of the new world's freedom. Then Reform, a child of German philosophy, unfurled its banner to revive the faith, reclaim the lost and fill the houses of worship with the inspiring strains of new devotion. Reform, whatever our reactionaries may say to the contrary, became the savior of Judaism in America. It opened the eyes of the blind to see Judaism's great opportunity and realize the mighty obligation thrust upon the American Jew

by the privileges he enjoys. In laying stress on the essentials and pushing the smaller things into the background, it kindled new love and zeal for the sacred heritage in the hearts of all, and roused the self-consciousness, the self-esteem of the Jew. It rendered him both more liberal-minded and more liberal-hearted.

At first Reform appealed to his esthetic taste. It beautified and dignified the service, and modernized the synagog to reflect new luster on the ancient faith. And here the American spirit of independence manifested itself at once. Even the conservatives dared not, as they do in Europe, denounce as un-Jewish the organ and the Confirmation, nor insist on the partition wall which all these centuries past Orientalism had reared in the synagog to keep the woman, the wife and daughter, out of the main body of worshippers. Yes, a mere glance at our temples shows the working of the American spirit, which, in doing away with Orientalism and rendering woman the equal of man in all spheres of religion, has given a new powerful impetus to all Jewish endeavors.

Then came consistent, systematic theological Reform, and took hold of the free American pulpit to preach in clarion notes those principles of historical progress which, in lighting up the traditions of the past, took the yoke of legalism, the burden of continuous self-reproach, from the conscience of the modern Jew, to lift him to the heights of vision of a world-uniting prophetic religion. And here American Judaism soon scored another victory in rejec ing the hypocritical maxim of European Jewry, which

made the rabbi the scapegoat of the congregation by insisting that the dietary and the minute Sabbath laws must be observed by proxy. Henceforth, manliness, sincerity and the courage of conviction became virtues prized in the American rabbi, and the pulpit grew to be a liberalizing influence, creating a generation of enlightened, yet truly loyal Jews and Jewesses. These were the men and women that formed the strength and vigor of our congregations and Jewish fraternities, that started and achieved the great work required at the time in the cause of religious education and philanthropy. In humble gratitude to God for the success and opulence that fell to their lot, they reared the temples and glorious institutions that have become the object of admiration and pride in the eyes of the non-Jewish world, and told our brethren in Europe that the ancient God of Israel still lives in the heart of the trans-Atlantic Jew.

And, as in building up our American institutions and in fighting for American liberty and American greatness, the Jew took a prominent part, as citizen and as soldier, so did American Judaism, as embodied in its men of progress and its leaders of Reform, uphold the cause of American freedom and human equality

Still, as most of these pioneers spoke in the tongue of their fatherland, and the progressive congregations themselves were recruited from the German element, Reform itself seemed to many but an exotic growth, an imported plant which failed to strike deep roots in the American soil.

Then came the man of profound practical insight and of undaunted energy and perseverance, Isaac M. Wise, the master-builder of American Judaism, and ploughed the soil and cast the seed, tentatively at first and amidst perplexing circumstances, often opposed because his plan, which ripened but slowly, was not understood. But his indomitable will and his unique power as leader of men carried him on to triumph and lasting success. Americanization of the Jew was his watchword and guiding motive from the very day he set foot on this free soil, and American Judaism will forever be bound up with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, of which he was the founder, and with the Hebrew Union College, by which he became to America what Johanan ben Zakkai, what Abba Areka became, at great turning-points of Jewish history, the master, the teacher of teachers, the harbinger of a new era of centralized intellectual and religious progress for coming generations. At first the Union aimed at bringing all but the ultra-orthodox congregations together for the purpose of creating a center of Jewish learning for the training of rabbis and the preservation of the ancestral faith in the new country. In this spirit of a common obligation and a common solidarity of interest, the Union was founded in 1873 and the College opened in 1875, and when on April 12, 1881, the present edifice was dedicated by Dr. Wise, the immortal founder and lifelong president of the College, and by the venerable president of the Board, Mr. Bernhard Bettmann, whom a benign Providence has spared to us to witness the further progress

of the institution, there was but one progressive American Israel and one Judaism, constituting, as Dr. Wise said, "neither a race nor a nation, but a religious denomination," all realizing the need of *American-bred* rabbis, because the generation born on this soil is intensely American, the need of enlightened rabbis, for this is a liberal age and an enlightened country." "All lines of demarcation were abandoned in the Union; all distinctions between Orthodox and Reform were regarded as obsolete, in view of the broad, liberal, humane and impartial spirit which governed the institution." Still, the conflicting views were but hushed, not harmonized, and the friction both in theory and practice was sure to come. The first graduates of the College, thoroughly imbued with the American spirit of independence, men of eloquence and of bold initiative, called to the pulpits of Einhorn, Hirsch and others, became outspoken champions of liberalism, and enthusiastically espoused the principles voiced at the Philadelphia and later at the Pittsburg conference. So clouds gathered over the College, and when finally the Pittsburgh platform of radical Reform, hailed by Dr. Wise, who presided, as a "Jewish-American declaration of independence," was adopted, there arose a storm which, notwithstanding the resolutions of perfect neutrality passed by the Union, divided American Israel anew into two camps and created the imperative demand for two Rabbinical schools, one for the conservative congregations of the East, the other for the progressive congregations, then still forming the great majority in the land. Yet far

from doing harm, the storm cleared the atmosphere and strengthened the cause of progress. It brought about a fuller consolidation of the forces.

There is room, nay, a necessity for both schools, and as it was said of the schools of Hillel and of Shammai, we may say: "The words of the living God are in both." Nor is there anything in the way of their working together for the common good in matters concerning the welfare and the needs of American Israel, as is done at present in regard to the English Bible translation.

In our camp the way was paved for the introduction of the Union Prayer Book, which, based on Einhorn's inimitable German work of genius, kindled a new religious fervor in young and old, and became a source of comfort, of elevation and inspiration to tens of thousands to whom the old ritual remained and will ever remain a sealed book. By adopting the same, the well-nigh two hundred congregations of the Union placed themselves on the side of Reform, endorsing the fundamental principle that not in a restoration of the Palestinian State and temple, but in building up of a universal kingdom of righteousness and peace, to which all lands and ages, all the great ones on earth contribute their share, will Israel's mission be fulfilled.

For the Union the opportunity came somewhat later to place itself on record as advocating the Reform principle, when, in 1898, in view of the Zionistic movement, it declared itself to be unalterably opposed to political Zionism, and America to be the home and the Zion of hope of the American Jew, Judaism's mission being spiritual, not political.

Small and humble in its beginnings, the Union has grown into a mighty instrument in promoting and spreading the teachings of progressive Judaism throughout the length and breadth of the land. By so doing and encouraging systematic work in behalf of religious education, by its synagog and school extension work, and the generous support of other educational efforts besides the College, it has strengthened the feeble, rallied the scattered, and created centers of religious life in remote parts of the land. It has become an efficient force in defending the cause of the Jew and his civic rights the world over, to make the name of the American Jew and of American Judaism respected and honored near and far.

But the strength and soul of the Union, its life-center, is the Hebrew Union College, the institution of learning which since 1883 has sent forth 130 rabbis to occupy most of the prominent pulpits in the land, and to wield a powerful influence in the cause of the religious education and social elevation of the Jew. The Hebrew Union College has created a new type of rabbi, a new standard for the Jewish ministry, one more congenial to the American soil and more responsive to the demands of a free, vigorous and enlightened people. The vocation of the American rabbi is to promote the personal, moral and spiritual welfare of old and young, of the members of his flock and the stranger at the gate, and manifest a deep concern in all communal interests, in all the great issues and problems of the times, instead of being closeted up in his study. Judaism must be to him a living truth, the hallowing of life, a battle for truth

and social justice, and not mere archaeology and ritualism, not dry learning and dead formalism.

While, therefore, we eagerly and reverently study the past, deriving strength and light from the rich storehouses of Jewish literature and history, inspiration and fervor, truth and righteousness from Bible, Talmud and Rabbinical writings, we do not foster and cultivate that cold and colorless "*Wissenschaft des Judenthums*" (science of Judaism), which fails to thrill the heart and kindle the soul with the spark from the live coal from God's empyrean, and is obviously compatible also with skepticism, atheism and hypocrisy. Like Heaven's manna, which was meat for the old and pabulum for the young, ours must be truth for head and heart, for sage and simple, for Jew and Non-Jew, positive as well as progressive. We want, above all, men of power and enthusiasm, men of faith and of principle, men of the spirit, fearless champions of righteousness, inspiring and inspired leaders and workers. We want sincerity, and therefore we draw no boundary lines for scientific, critical and historical research, either in the Biblical or the philosophical and Hellenistic realm, to warn off the student, saying, "Touch me not!" thereby to awaken doubt and dissent in the truth-seeking youth. We apply rather the historical method, which shows the past in all its stages and phases to be a continuous process of evolution and involution, so as to enable us not only to understand and appreciate the entire religious life of the various ages, but also to arrive at a deeper comprehension of the needs of our own time, and find the true justification

for, as well as the logical necessity of, altering our forms of religion in view of life's altered conditions. Nay, more. The very principle of development and continual progress casts its searchlight on the remotest past and the most distant future, to show the providential working of the Jewish genius as the creator and promoter of the highest religious truth for mankind, and thus explain the world-mission of the Jew and his relation to the two great world-religions, which are flesh of his flesh and spirit of his spirit. Particularly does a deeper insight into Prophetism and Mosaism, such as we endeavor to obtain in our studies, bring out in clear, ringing notes the message of Judaism to our age, the message of *social justice*, by which all the great vexatious problems of our industrial and social life are to find their ultimate and peaceful solution.

Surely to minds thus trained, to hearts thus prepared, the Jewish ministry must be more than a mere profession, and Judaism more than a mere congregational and communal, scholastic or national concern. It can be nothing less than a world-task, a power working for righteousness, individual and social, and for truth universal, to influence, to uplift and to spiritualize all of life and the whole of humanity. These are the views and traditions of the Hebrew Union College, with its faculty representing eminent Jewish scholarship, devoted to the cause of learning, and its administration representing sound, practical wisdom and whole-hearted loyalty to our time-honored faith.

American Judaism, as represented by the Union and the Hebrew Union College, stands for loyalty

as well as for liberalism, for faithfulness as well as for freedom of thought, for positiveness as well as for progressiveness in religion, for a profound Jewish consciousness and Jewish spirituality as well as for a genuine and strong American spirit and sentiment. For ours is a religious and ethical truth that appeals to all hearts, and is bound to win a world eager to listen and learn. Ours is a religion of righteousness that will have its share in the moulding of the life and character of all men and classes in a land in which the Jew's voice is heard as arbiter of peace, as statesman and as educator and benefactor of men. To us, therefore, liberal Judaism in Germany to-day looks for inspiration and re-invigoration; to us liberal Judaism in England looks for leadership and leaders.

Will this Judaism of ours assume a different aspect amidst the constant influx of new elements of Jewry bringing along different views and traditions, which tends to lead backward instead of forward, which, instead of Americanizing the Jew, threatens to Orientalize him? I, for one, have too much confidence in our blessed land and its institutions to fear for the future. The foundations of liberty and human equality laid by the Puritan, the Quaker and the Cavalier, by the framers of the American Constitution, will not be overthrown nor radically changed by the millions that are yet to enter the land. Neither will the American Jew and American Judaism be Russianized, Hebraized or Orientalized by visionary idealists. The process of fermentation, of assimilation, will require years and decades, but as to the outcome we need not fear. You may as well believe

that the Hudson will some day turn its waters backward to the source as that American Judaism will retrograde and despise a civilization that gave humanity its individual and social liberty and equality under the very influence of the Decalogue of Sinai.

All the greater is the task and the responsibility of the Union and the Hebrew Union College as guardian and banner-bearer of progressive American Judaism, and you, the delegates of the Congregations, must uphold and strengthen our arm. You have reared the institution of Jewish learning in the American spirit upon democratic principles, to render it a light-house for the people and a power-house of the spirit for congregations and leaders, and you dare not rest until it stand forth a monument of spiritual grandeur to reflect credit upon the entire body of American Jews and rank in efficiency and comprehensive learning alongside of any similar American institution.

A few princely donations by men whose names have become a household word in American Israel encouraged us to begin erecting an edifice, such as has been planned, more adequate to the needs and demands of a large theological school than the one we have had until now, but more is needed for its completion and more for its maintenance. More contributions are necessary to complete the I. M. Wise fund, and many more scholarships than we have for the encouragement of our students. Nor can we ever expect to build up a true academic school of Jewish learning in the modern sense of the word without having chairs endowed for the Oriental

languages and for Hellenistic literature, neither will we be able fully to equip the modern rabbi with the knowledge required for communal work without a chair for Applied Sociology and Scientific Jewish Philanthropy.

I am well aware of the fact that the gigantic efforts made towards ameliorating the social condition of the thousands and tens of thousands of our unfortunate brethren flocking to our shores from the benighted East, push all other demands into the background, and the stupendous work done by our charitable and educational institutions in the various cities of the land practically monopolizes the interest and energy of our warm-hearted well-to-do Jews and Jewesses. Still it is the *soul* and not the body, it is Judaism and not the Jew that claims the first consideration of the Union. Look at the motto of the Union. Its seal bears as inscription the words found on the first pages of the ancient Hebrew Prayer Book: *Talmud Torah Keneged Kullam.* "None of the great works of charity and benevolence done for the benefit of suffering and struggling humanity equals in value that which is done for the promotion of the Torah, for the planting of the Jewish faith and Jewish truth in the minds and hearts of the people." It is the religious heritage of the Jew that trained his soul to become leader in philanthropy and the champion of righteousness.

The Torah is the tree of life, the fruitage of which are the virtues of the Jew.

Look then, ye delegates and members of the Union, as faithful guardians to the growing influence

and power of our temple of learning with the ark of the Law in its Holy of Holies, the Hebrew Union College, "the stronghold of free scientific research and of religious progress." Make it a monument of Jewish loyalty to the ancient faith, worthy of our glorious country and of free American Israel. Let Jewish scholarship in America, permeated by the spirit of healthy progress and illumined by the light of modern research, be one that enlists the attention of the world. Let our educational institutions for rabbis and for teachers challenge their kindred in spiritual and intellectual power and efficiency, and the cause of progressive American Judaism will be assured and its future bright and great.

"When all thy children are taught of the Lord, great will be the peace of thy children," the builders of the temple of humanity's God. Amen.

19.

MOSES AND JESUS.*

WHEN Moses prayed to God to show him His ways, the Lord said: "I will make My glory pass, and thou shalt behold Me, after I have passed by thee, but My face shall not be seen." All beginnings of things are hidden from mortal eyes. No eye ever saw the grass grow. Nor did any one ever observe the awakening of self-consciousness in a child. The origin of physical and mental life is veiled. God says: Let there be light! and behold, there is light. However much light modern investigation has thrown upon the process of evolution of matter and mind, creation and revelation remain mysteries. As it was two thousand years ago, so science is still puzzled by the question: What came first? The egg or the hen? The acorn or the oak? The grain of sand or the hill? Science, in order to operate, must separate cause and effect, while actually they form one organic whole. In history, too, the problem vexes us: Are the great men, the master-minds of the centuries, the products or the builders of the ages? Is the genius the child or the father of the idea or the movement it represents? Is music the creation or the creator of Bach and Beethoven? Did poetry produce Shakespeare, or Shakespeare

*Lecture delivered before the Beth El Congregation, Albany in 1892.

his poetry? Did art make a Phidias, a Michael Angelo and a Raphael, or the men these arts?

There was a time when religion was looked upon as the invention of priestcraft, and the great religious leaders and law-givers as mere impostors. We know better now. We have learned to recognize religion as the strongest and deepest of all human forces, as the one that cradled laws, arts and sciences, as the guardian of morality and the chief factor of civilization. But the prevailing tendency to skepticism and criticism has, on the other hand, led us to attribute everything to the successive work of ages, and to underrate individual power. We are inclined to reduce the lives of Moses and Jesus, not to speak of the founders of other religious sytems, to mere myths and fables, because they are wrapt in legend. Yet is the great drama in which a powerful nation here, and a world-conquering sect there, are ushered into existence, really cleared and brightened up by the mere striking off of such names as Moses and Jesus from the pages of history? Is the great historical fact of the appearance of a power like Judaism and like Christianity better accounted for by unknown impersonal factors than by known personal forces? The more I ponder on the history of Moses and Jesus in connection with the two great religions of which each forms the central figure, the more does the conviction take hold of me that the life and teaching of each not only reflected, but actually determined and embodied the character, the aims and ideals of their followers to an eminent degree. Their own principles became characteristic

types of the religions they represent, and because these principles run in convergent lines, they could not avoid colliding with one another, while, in fact, they must merge into one another and complete each other, as they have grown from one and the same root. And only in the same measure as a mutual understanding is reached between them, are mutual recognition and respect and a final reconciliation between Jew and Christian made possible.

I.

Who is Moses, around whose banner we, the progressive sons of the nineteenth century, are stil to rally, and whose law we must, under a thousandfold martyrdom, if it needs be, in the midst of a hostile world, forever uphold? Egypt's unlocked hieroglyphical treasures furnish no glimpse of him and his doings. The monuments of King Rameses II. and Menephtha, his contemporaries, show no trace of the Hebrew exodus with its miraculous events. The annalists are perfectly silent concerning Jahveh and his servants. Exactly as the law of gravitation by which Earth and Neptune are bound to the solar orb, and this again to a larger system of stars, flashed upon the mind of Isaac Newton to enlighten for him the universe, so did the law of Sinai, by which nations are freed from thraldom and the eternal right of man is established, beam upon the mind of the Hebrew shepherd. Explain it as you may, a spark of the divine fire of righteousness fell upon the soul of Moses to dispel for him the world's

darkness. The Decalogue may be the successive work of generations; Moses was the first to give voice to the call: "I am the Lord who leadeth out of the house of bondage."

Did he then, steal the name Jahveh out of the mysteries of the Egyptian priesthood, as has been claimed? Or was it transferred from some obscure corner of Arabia by some unknown seer to Israel's sanctuaries, as recent critics maintain? The idea is so preposterous, that one wonders how wise men could seriously express it. On the contrary, if anything, Jahveh, the God of Abraham, of Moses and of Elijah, strikes us as being rather too realistic, too natural a power. Dwelling on the heights of Sinai, enwrapt in pillars of fire and smoke, sending forth hail and stormwind to shake the earth, the air and the water with the powers of His awful majesty, He still had in those days all the qualities of a Bedouin Deity ruling the vast desert. However, the spiritual insight of Moses lifted Sinai to sublimer heights. His religious genius invested the thunder, the lightning and whirlwind of Jahveh with the sacred purpose of purging the world of its wrong in order to establish righteousness. Earth assumed a new aspect, when the frown or smile of heaven betokened the wrath or the pleasure of a God of Justice. The wisdom and skill of the priests on the Nile were set to naught by the plain shepherd of Midian who, without title and mandate from their schools, brought a new message from the great Ruler of heaven. How did all the gods of proud Egypt crouch and tremble before the great God of Israel whose shield was

righteousness, whose seal truth, whose essence the all-devouring fire of holiness! All their gigantic temples, obelisks and pyramids, all the colossal structures of art and science dotting Egypt from sea to cataract, totter and tumble as His hand touches, as His eye scans them, since they are built on injustice, on oppression.

Yes, there is a deep inward relationship, a great moral affinity between God and His prophet. There is a fire in Moses' bosom, mighty and deep as in a glowing yet slumbering volcano, the top of which is all serene and bright with smiling landscapes, while suddenly it pours forth its devouring streams of lava, to spread terror round about. Moses' soul is set ablaze with the holy wrath of justice at the sight of violence and innocent suffering to avenge the wrong on the evil-doer, while his heart reaches forth in tender compassionate love to vindicate the right of the oppressed. Thus is Jahveh a jealous God, who tolerates no wrong. His fire consumes injustice and falsehood, while righteousness is at the core. There is something hard as a rock and unyielding like granite in the character of Moses, yet only he who says: "Let the heavens fall, but justice prevail!" is the man to unhinge a world of cruel wickedness and folly, and rebuild it on the adamantine foundations of the right and the good.

There is a sternness and rigidity in the Hebrew Scriptures that often startles and scares the soft-hearted, yet this was the forge in which the Jewish character was to be formed, and the laws made, that were to outlast the ages. This was the quarry out

of which "pyramids of men" were built; this the chisel with which men were carved, endowed with a heroism that defies death.

In the plain of Babylonia palaces have been unearthed, each brick of which has the name of King Nebuchadnezzar, its builder, engraved on it. So does every single law in the Mosaic books, no matter when they were written, bear the stamp of that mind which liberated the Hebrew slaves by the principle of justice, saying: "Yield not! Swerve not! Right must triumph over every wrong!" Hearken to the awe-inspiring threats of the Pentateuch! Read the fulminant and fury-lashed appeals of the prophets! Or peruse the minute statutes of Talmudical casuistry. They are all born of the same spirit of unbending righteousness, of unflinching truth. The sum and substance of Judaism is: As God's eyes cannot behold evil, so banish all injustice from His sight. Stand up in defence of the right, be it that of the high or the low-born, of the rich or the poor, the free or the slave, the native or the stranger! Yield not, for justice is God's. Brook no sin. Bad means can never be justified by good ends. There is forgiveness and repentance for sinners, but not until the wrong has been undone; for the fruit of sin is death, and Jahveh is the God of life.

And behold the people moulded by the grea law-giver! What are the classic people of Hellas with their master-works of art and science, the Roman with his law, the Chaldean with his astronomy, and all the great nations of history with their glorious achievements compared with the insignificant, the

despised and persecuted yet unyielding Jew? Indestructible like Sinai, he seems to be hewn out of the rock. While the rest furnished the framework, the modes of culture, the followers of Moses offered the basis, the essence, the law of conduct. Men can live without letters, without art and science, without comfort and beauty, but not as men without justice and goodness. And what is the secret of this wonderful endurance of the Jew, his marvelous power of resistance? The souls of all coming generations partook in the oath of the covenant of Sinai, say the rabbis. Indeed, there is a spark of that fire of Moses in every Jew, to make him defy the persecutor and brave the enticer. The baptismal fount only worked, according to Leroy Beaulieu, by the law of natural selection to make the rest of the Jews the firmer and more steadfast. Sneer as much as you may at those sharply cut features of the Hebrew, they betoken resistance to the last. Light-hearted audiences may applaud Portia and vilify Shylock. If, however, heroic wrestling with injustice deserves the prize, Shylock must receive our homage. The laws of Venice are wrong, and the Jew is right. Nor is the Jew satisfied with a bill drawn on the world beyond the grave. This life of man here on earth must turn out right. Justice must hold sway first, then love and peace can reign—not before. From Isaiah to Cremieux and Lasker, the Jews have been God's champions of Justice and Truth.

And glance over the march of centuries. Watch the path of history. The trumpet blasts of Sinai, announcing Jahveh's Day of Judgment, sounded

the dirge over antiquity's fall and rung in the era of Christianity. Only by an appeal from the New Testament to the Old, from Jesus to Moses, did Luther, Calvin and Cromwell succeed in combating and defeating Papal tyranny. The tempests and thunders of Mount Horeb ushered in the Reformation, the Revolution, the American Declaration of Independence, the modern era of liberty.

There is a majestic grandeur in the statue of Moses created by the chisel of Michael Angelo. His every muscle and nerve from head to foot betray a resolute firmness of will and clearness of purpose, which seem to inspire us with confidence, telling us to safely commit the destinies of mankind to these arms that carry the tablets of the law, to those shoulders that bear that lofty head protuberant with light. And yet Moses died with the land of promise unreached before him. He claimed no perfection, no infallibility, no absolute goodness or holiness. He was but the servant of the Most High, and died, leaving his work to be continued and finished by all the coming generations.

II.

Who, on the other hand, is Jesus, the central figure of the New Testament, the divine ideal of the Christian? We shall leave aside the story of the crucifixion, the tragic end of Jesus, with which Christianity began its course. Never would the name of Jesus have been uttered by the Jews with any but reverential admiration, had the guilt and the curse of his

murder not been flung upon them, his own kinsmen, at a time when it was deemed wise policy to exonerate the Roman prefect and his soldiers from the crime. We shudder at the thought of the millions that fell as victims to this slanderous charge; but we do not blame Jesus for the cruelties perpetrated in his name. Neither shall we consider Jesus as a performer of miracles, in which quality alone, to judge from Rabbinical tradition, he left a lasting impression on the generality of Jews. These wondrous cures formed the specialty of the entire class of Essenes, a sect of saintly hermits practising baptism and invocations of the Holy Ghost, from whom the carpenter's son of Nazareth emanated.

We are exclusively concerned here with the great popular teacher of Galilee, the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, the promulgator of a new covenant, of a new law of love, as is the Christian claim. And there behold the sweet silver-tongued prophet of the people, as he walks among the untaught and forsaken, attracting the crowds by his exquisite parables and bringing them the cheering message of the All-loving Father in heaven. He moves among sinners saying, "I am the good shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the fold, to seek the one that has gone astray in order to lead it back." He takes his seat among the forlorn and outcasts saying, "Not the healthy need the physician, but the sick." Listen to him as he teaches, "Be not angry with thy brother! Resist not evil! Hate not! Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you." Or watch him, as he takes

a little child and, putting it in the midst of the crowd, says, "Be like little children, and you are not far from the kingdom of heaven." Seeing a woman dragged along to meet her punishment on the charge of adultery, he cries out, "Let him that is without guilt cast the first stone!" and then tells the fallen one, "Go thou, and sin no more!" There is a wonderful music in that voice, an undefinable grace about the serene face. There is a fascinating charm about every word that drops from those benign lips.

And again how bold and crushing does his language become when, turning to the haughty aristocracy, he exclaims, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," or when speaking of unlawful desires of the flesh, he says, "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out! If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee that one part of thy body should perish than that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

There is a ring of true greatness in all these words. We need not wonder, if the multitude followed with ardor and admiration the young master who spoke thus differently from all the rest, eager to offer him the highest crown within the gift of the Jew, the diadem of Messiahship which he bought at the price of his life.

Yet does this holy man with all his heart-winning persuasiveness and touching humanity really surpass the imposing nature of Moses? Does the prophet of the New Testament eclipse the creative genius of the Old? It is like comparing a sweet flower to

a mighty oak, the slender steeple to the massive structure upon which it is reared.

Naturally enough did the twelve centuries which elapsed after Moses elevate the moral status of the people, ennoble their ethical and spiritualize their religious views. Most of the teachings ascribed to Jesus by the New Testament writers were current among the Essenes and in the Pharisean schools. The Golden Rule, the so-called Lord's Prayer, the greater part of the Sermon on the Mount are derived from other sources. In fact, half of what is attributed to Jesus contradicts the other half of what he is reported to have said. For if he really placed himself on the shoulders of Moses, saying, "I have not come to change one iota of the law; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," he could not well have dreamt of antagonizing either the Sabbath or the temple. And if he dared refuse to cure a heathen woman, saying, "It is not meet to cast the bread to the dogs," his was not even the broad-heartedness of a Hillel and Philo whose religion of love knew no confines of race or sect.

The greatness of Jesus lay in that he lent new grandeur to humility, in that he broke down the barriers of the school and brought the wisdom of life from the learned home to the lowliest, thus striking the keynote of humanity. He actually became the redeemer of the poor, the friend of the cheerless, the comforter of the woe-stricken. He lent, both through his life and through his death as the Man of Sorrow, a deeper meaning, a more solemn pathos to suffering, sickness and sin. Life received

from him a new holiness, a greater inspiration. And as he went forth to seek and provide for the lost sheep in Israel, so did the Church founded on his name go forth to redeem the poverty stricken, the ignorant and the neglected, all the lower classes of society. Christianity was the gospel for the poor and the despised. Hence all the works of love, charity and philanthropy, fostered among the Jews, found under the cross a new powerful impetus, a larger, world-wide scope.

But the very virtue of the teaching, of the character and life of Jesus was also his weakness. He was of that type of idealists that appeal to the sentiments, but overlook the demands of real life. Considering the terrible catastrophe that soon afterwards befell Judea and was already fast approaching, we are amazed at the almost idyllic life the Nazarene saint passes in the midst of his followers on the beautiful lake of Gennesareth, perfectly listless and unconcerned, while a world around him sinks into ruin. The sentiments expressed by him remind us of a recluse waiting and praying for the millenium of peace, while the shocks and earthquakes of war resound in the distance. It is the political apathy of the Essene, which, in the face of the boiling wrath of the patriots, prompts the cool advice: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's. '*Resist not the Evil One*!' for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" This is the substance of the entire New Testament. "Yield, rather than assert your right! Swear not! Struggle not! Abandon all worldly care and ambition. Renounce all possession

and domestic bliss! The God who clothes the lilies in the field will also provide for you!" This was the road straightway to the cloister and the nunnery, to world-contempt, to misanthropy and asceticism, to a double code of ethics, one for the layman and another for the monk.

This principle of non-resistance influenced and determined the entire course of Christianity. While Jesus the Christ was, after the visions of his resurrection, expected to come down from the clouds with his angelic host, to redeem his saints, the new sect surrendered the world to the Evil One. "Resist not!" being the maxim, passion, vice and ignorance speedily took hold of the Church, and the sword in the hands of the former persecuted made them persecutors. Resist not! was the principle, and consequently justice had to yield to violence, and truth to pagan falsehood and folly. Error and wickedness forced their way into the council and up to the throne, and the mild figure of Jesus was transferred to ideal heights beyond the reach of worldly pursuit. He assumed now the face of a Syrian, then of a Greek, and later on that of a barbarian god, and his name shielded all possible wrong.

Justice and truth are the foundations of God's throne: Christ's—the Christian God's—is love, but rather lacking in justice and truth. Jesus' strong side was the heart, the sentiment. And so did Christianity deepen the pathos, enrich the emotional side of life. By her care for the sick and the suffering, by her cultivation of art, of music, of painting, the entire soul-life of man was unfolded and refined by the

Church as by no other sect. Yet when after the centuries of medieval barbarism and despotism, freedom of thought and action was to be regained for Europe, when the State, when science and industrial independence had to be built up, Sinai with its Decalogue offered a safer basis than did Calvary with its beatitudes. The idealism of Jesus was, like any other Utopian system, like communism and mysticism, the vision of a time when the wolf and the lamb would pasture together in peace, not the programme of a life of struggle and strife, full of contrasts such as ours is.

Moses, too, spent forty days on the heights of Sinai immersed in contemplation, but he stepped down with his law to elevate and educate his people for their high mission of righteousness and truth. For religion is not a dreamland, a mere realm of vision, a hope for a world to come. It is the upbuilding of divine life in all its realities here on earth. It is the indwelling of God in man. Jesus represents the highest ideal of the Christian; Moses points to a higher type of manhood. Neither Sinai nor Golgotha, but Zion, as the goal of all the nations in history, is the focus and goal of united humanity Did Christianity indeed enshrine and embody love, the feminine element of the world? Judaism first insists on, and battles for, righteousness and truth. Duty, the sterner part of life, is also the stronger and more indispensable one. Still we believe that, as has recently been so well said, the two together yield the perfect ideal; their unity will make humanity whole and free. Amen.

20.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH CHARITY.*

CHARITY from the Latin *Caritas* is display of love and sympathy by man towards man. It is accordingly to be viewed as a trait of humanity, as the Greek word philanthropy also suggests. This is exactly true to a certain extent. The history of man is essentially the history of benevolence. While the brute does not extend its compassion beyond the maternal care for its young, and the sight of suffering and sickness excites disgust and antipathy in the animal's breast rather than pity and helpful love, man by ties of compassionate tenderness and sympathy feels drawn towards the ailing and grief-stricken. The appeal of the helpless and forsaken for protection finds a resonance in the breast of the fiercest savage to make him cast aside his javelin and boomerang to receive the suppliant stranger as brother. Read the inscriptions on Egyptian tombs of 5,000 years ago, and you find extolled in glowing praise the virtue of kindness to the homeless and fatherless. So did the people of Athens hold in high esteem that liberal-hearted citizen of theirs who in time of want lavishly showered his bounties upon the people, saying: "I would rather be poor than

*Paper read before the Jewish Chautauqua Assembly, July 26, 1903.

spend all my possessions upon myself." Also Rome with her insatiable oppressions and wars of conquests, presents as redeeming features those immense distributions of gold and corn for the relief of the pressing need of the populace that made it the willing slave of the wealthy, not to speak of the large bequests made by the emperors for the sheltering of waifs and invalid soldiers. Nor can an impartial seeker after truth afford to ignore the sweet and tender lessons of sympathy and beneficence uttered by the Hindoo prince Gautama Buddha, whose hundreds of millions of adherents have for the last twenty-five hundred years spent their best efforts upon alleviating the pain and suffering of their fellow-creatures, and who certainly were the first in erecting hospitals for the sick. You see, I am far from claiming charity to be an exclusively Jewish virtue. Nor do I go to Lecky's History of European Morals for the support of my view that charity is simply a human characteristic. I read it in my Bible, where not only the most exquisite sentiments regarding compassionate love for human kinship, whether slave or stranger, are put into the mouth of the Arabian shepherd-prince Job (in Ch. xxxiv), but where a heathen woman, who follows the maternal impulse of her womanly soul, the Egyptian princess, is introduced as the guardian-angel of Israel's greatest man, of Moses the lawgiver. And yet I speak, without bias, of charity as a specific Jewish imperative. It was the Jewish law that made charity a human obligation. It was the genius of the Jewish people that invested benevolence with the sense of duty to render it a divine command.

All the large-hearted munificence bestowed upon the masses by Greek or Roman men of wealth was at best a spontaneous act of magnanimity which benefited the giver rather than the receiver; it elevated the high born who gave, and impoverished or degraded the low-born who took. Nor did the benevolence taught by Buddha help and uplift the down-trodden and unfortunate. In his opinion life itself is a misfortune. In the common misery of existence there was neither joy nor blessing in the bestowal of charity, and the ailing brute evoked tears of sympathy, or claimed a place in the hospital as much as helpless man. It was the Jewish law-giver, bard and prophet that disclosed the divine nature of charity, giving it a scope commensurate with the progress of man; and it is the purpose of this paper to outline its history throughout the ages in life and literature, in laws and institutions.

In doing this I shall not follow the traditional view which regards as prime source and factor of Jewish charity the Mosaic law enjoining the people to leave the forgotten sheaves and the corners of the field to the poor widow and fatherless. Such customs rest upon unwritten laws, before they are embodied in the code of law. Laws and customs originate not in the head of priest, prophet and sage, but among an approving multitude whose consensus sanctions them and gives them the divine stamp of a higher origin.

Thus the Bible gives us, so to say, a photographic picture of the way the law of charity was first spelled forth. The owners of fields, of vineyards and olive trees are seen holding their harvests and carrying

home wagons full of sheaves of wheat, of grapes and olives, while the poor, the widows and fatherless look on with hungry eyes and starving souls. But there are a number of sheaves that have been dropped on the way, or single grapes and olives still hanging on the stalks or trees that have been overlooked, and the poor creatures wait with eagerness for the moment when they may seize them and eat them, or carry them home to their dear ones. As they attempt to do so, behold, there the heavy hands of the harvesters fall upon them and drive them off with furious lashes. Instantly one of tenderer soul steps forth and stays his fellow-harvesters saying: It is not proper to deny one of these pitiable people the little privilege they claim in taking these stray sheaves and single grapes and olives. And henceforth it became customary among the Hebrews to leave the stray sheaves and grapes to the needy. But we are in the position of tracing the custom of leaving the corners of the fields to the poor still further. Among the old Teutons the last crops of the harvest were altogether sacred to the god of fertility, and they left them untouched and burned them as a sacrifice under many strange pagan rites. Similar customs have recently been found also among Semitic tribes. The fact is that individual ownership was in primitive times regarded as an attempt to rob the gods of their property for which some atoning sacrifice seemed necessary. How much sweeter and saner, then, was the Hebrew view which consecrated the corners of the field to the poor, as the people to be befriended in the name of God, the Giver of all good!

Nor was this the only way the Hebrew farmers learned to befriend the poor and forsaken. It being the most natural thing in the world to have the poor as bystanders when the rich held their harvest festivals amidst great rejoicing. Hebrew custom made it a law to invite the homeless and fatherless to participate in these feasts and gladden their hearts also. And as during the former shepherd life, both the firstlings and the tenth of the yearly produce of the flocks and the herds were considered as holy to the God who opens the womb, so was the tenth of the produce of the fields also sacred to God, not only to be eaten at the sanctuary, but to be shared with by, or handed over altogether every second or third year, either to the poor Levite or to the stranger, the widow and fatherless. Nor was this all. As the number seven was a holy number among all Semite tribes by which covenant oaths were taken, so was the seventh day, the seventh month, the seventh year and the Jubilee year, that is the half year following the seven times seventh year, made a season of readjustment of all inadequacies of social life, when master and servant, rich and poor, should be made to feel that all have an equal claim upon life's gifts. And so were these years devoted to the supply of the wants of the poor by the release of all claims of the rich upon landed property or slaves. The underlying thought of all these practices was dictated by that spirit of charity so peculiar to the tenderhearted shepherd race, the type of which was Rebecca with her compassionate love for the fatigued fellow-creatures, man or brute, and which resented as

inhuman the unkindness of a people who, like Edom and Moab, would refuse passing caravans bread and water out of their store of plenty.

It is this inborn pastoral kindness that gave rise to all these customs, before they were embodied in any code of law, and it is just because the Abraham spirit of human tenderness and compassion permeated the prophets, to whom the shepherd ideal of kindness and simplicity remained dear and sacred, that they became the God-chosen champions of a justice which laid all the stress on the rights and the claims of the poor and the feeble, as against their wealthy and powerful oppressors. It was the unwritten law of morality and custom, the ancient and deep-rooted practice of the shepherd race, ever anxious to take care of the suffering and famishing creature, to which these matchless defenders of the down-trodden appealed, when they insisted that to serve God is to aid His pensioners, the needy and forsaken, and that the sight of distress should be the divine summons to come to the rescue. Thus utterance was given to the ethical view that the naked found on the street has a claim upon our garment, until he is clothed; the hungry upon our bread, until his hunger is stilled; the one exposed to storm and cold without shelter upon our own protecting roof, until he is brought into safety. In other words, that feeling of sympathy with those in want which moves more or less every human heart, prompting it to helpfulness, has been developed by the genius of the Jew, owing to his patriarchial traditions, into a deep and firm sense of duty, into a law of social righteousness, so

that every one who has, should be impressed with the feeling of responsibility for the weal and woe of him who has not.

And here lies the essential difference between the Mosaic and every other code of law. Take that now so famous code of Hamurabi, so interesting and so instructive as being the oldest known in history. It is the embodiment of the principle that might constistutes right. It has no room for helping love. Property is valued, not personality. Man is held in bondage for every piece of property not returned. Exactly the same view is taken of debt in ancient Roman law. Shylock's pound of flesh is taken from the Twelve Tablets of Rome. It is the Jewish law that recognizes the principle of mercy as an element of justice. It is in the name of the Lord who is gracious, that the raiment given as a pledge is to be returned to the owner when needed for his personal comfort. "Return the pledge when the sun goes down that he (the poor who owns it) may sleep in his raiment and bless thee, and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God." The whole relation of man to man is to be established on mutual sympathy and forbearance. Hence ordinances occur such as these: "If thy brother be waxen poor and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him, whether he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee." During the Biblical time they had no organized system of relief, and so people in dire want sold themselves of their own accord as slaves; but then the Mosaic law urged kind treatment of the victim of such conditions, and

did everything to prevent such servitude as contradictory of the principles of equality of men before God. It laid down two fundamental principles of charity. First, every possession involves an obligation. God, as the Giver of all blessings, as the actual Owner of the land, claims certain portions of His gifts, part of the annual produce, for those in need. "For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore, I command thee, saying: Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, thy poor and thy needy, in thy land." In insisting, therefore, that on every occasion of joy and thanksgiving for the bounties of heaven, the poor should be remembered, the law views charity as a legal assessment of the rich, and not merely as a spontaneous act of generosity left to individuals who may, and may not, discharge their duty towards their fellow beings. Of course, it still remains a free-will offering. R. Akiba, when asked by a Roman general: "Why does your God who loves the needy not provide for their support himself," answered, "God, the Father of both rich and poor, wants the one to help the other, so as to make the world a household of love." And there is a second fundamental principle of charity expressed in the law, and this is that of personal responsibility. The cry of the distressed is an appeal which must find a response in the heart of the fortunate, or else He who executes the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, will hear it and punish those that remain deaf to the call of duty. The poor are My people, says God; they stand under God's special protection. "He that hath pity unto the poor lendeth unto the

Lord." It is especially this view of life which makes the strong bear with the weak, and the prosperous provide for the unfortunate—a view entirely foreign to pagan thought which changed the moral aspect of the world. It did not merely, as is stated by Christian writers, render the Mosaic poor laws fundamental parts of the Christian State and of Christian civilization, but it created that system of organized charity, those institutions of benevolence to which the Christian Church owes her wondrous triumphs throughout the centuries, and which existed in Jewry long before the rise of Christianity, though not as fully developed and as richly endowed as they were, when Roman opulence and power furnished the Church with the means to achieve her grand and far-reaching works of redeeming love.

It is this chapter of Jewish history about which the greatest errors prevail, owing to the fact that Christian writers on the subject either had no access to Jewish sources, even if they were free from prejudice, or they took no notice of the Rabbinical writings, taking it for granted that it was Christianity which, according to their preconceived notion, revealed to the world, the principle of love, while Judaism is and ever was under the bondage of the law, from which the New Testament Christ alone liberated the world.

The rabbis have two words for charity. The one is "Zedakah," the practice of righteousness which consists in the giving of money to provide for the immediate needs of the poor; the other is *Gemilut Hasadim*, the bestowal of kindness which includes the

elements of personal helpfulness. This again the old Hasidim, the pious ones whose chief occupation was the practice of charity, divided into seven or ten branches: the feeding of the hungry and giving the thirsty to drink; the clothing of the naked; the visiting of the sick; the burying of the dead; the ransoming of the captives; the educating of the fatherless, and providing poor maidens with dowries, so as to enable them to marry. All those who know something of old Jewish life are acquainted with the fact that every large Jewish community had various associations, fraternities and sisterhoods—*hebrot*—who devoted their time to these works of benevolence, such as made a specialty of one of these. Now the general belief is that these associations or *hebrot* whose historic records reach back only a few hundred years, were called into existence only during the middle ages, and often the assertion has been made also by Jewish scholars that hospitals and asylums are institutions which the Jews copied from their Christian surroundings. This is not so. As early as the third century B. C. E., Simon the Just, one of the last of the Men of the Great Synagogue, declared that the moral welfare of the world rests upon three things; upon an organized system of instruction in the Law, upon organized worship and upon an organized system of charity and benevolence. Wherever Jews settled in sufficiently large numbers—and that was wherever commerce offered them opportunities, along the whole Mediterranean Sea, ever since the time of Alexander the Great—there sprang up synagogues as centers of worship, of religious

instruction and of practical charity. They were probably built by those devotees of piety and love, known as Essenes, who traveled far and wide as disciples of Moses and followers of the example of Abraham and other reputed saints of a remote antiquity in doing the work of love mercy to win their fellow-creatures for God, the universal Father whose ways are mercy and kindness. I cannot go into detail, but there are ample proofs given in Talmud and Midrash, showing how these Essene brotherhoods, from whose ranks Jesus and his early followers emerged, pursued and developed the whole plan of systematic relief, which the Church afterwards adopted. In fact, it may be stated without fear of challenge that whatever was taught and practised in the New Testament circles by Jesus and his disciples in regard to charity, has been taken over from Judaism. Let me illustrate by two instances: In Matthew xxv, 31-46, the following words are put into the mouth of Jesus: "When the Son of Man—that is the Messiah—shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, and he shall sit upon the throne to judge the people and separate the lambs—that is the righteous—from the goats, placing the lambs to his right, and the goats—that is the unrighteous—to the left, thus shall the Messiah say unto them on his right hand: 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me;

I was in prison, and ye came to release me.' Then shall the righteous answer him, saying: 'Lord, when saw we thee hungered, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee, or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?' And the Messiah shall answer and say unto them: 'I say unto you; inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And so, vice versa, to the unrighteous who refused to do these acts of kindness he will say; 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.' " Now these words plainly refer to the various branches of charity practised by the Hasidim, called the white lambs in the Book of Enoch, in contradistinction to the goats that are rejected on the great Judgment Day by the Messiah or Son of Man. And the whole passage corresponds with a Midrashic interpretation of the Psalm verse; "Open unto me the gates of righteousness that I may enter," according to which he who feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, takes in the stranger, clothes the naked and ransoms the captives will see the gates of bliss open to him, because what he does to the poor he does to God's protegés, and it is as if he gave it to God himself. You see how much more intelligible and clear this New Testament passage becomes when viewed in the light of Jewish life and thought. Let me refer you to another characteristic saying attributed to Jesus. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth crorupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal." The original of this rather obscure saying has been preserved for us in the following highly interesting story of the Talmud: The son of Queen Helen of Adiabene became like his more famous mother a warm adherent of Judaism, and when famine had broken out in Judea, both the queen and her son sent victuals and money in great plenty to Jerusalem for distribution among the poor. For this the king was severely reproached by the other princes of the royal house, who said: "Thy royal fathers gathered riches, and thou didst spend them instead." Whereupon the noble king aptly replied, with reference to Biblical verses: "My fathers have gathered treasures on earth; I in heaven. My fathers have gathered treasures where thieves can lay hands upon them and take them; I, where no man can lay hands upon them; my fathers have gathered treasures that perish; I for a world that does not perish." How much more striking and beautiful is this Rabbinic passage!

But the story about the great munificence of the Queen and King of Abiabene during the Palestine famine furnishes us with very valuable information concerning one point which greatly interests us here. Josephus relates that the king sent great sums of money to the foremost men of Jerusalem for distribution among the people. These foremost men were none other than the Gabbaë Zedakah, the charity administrators who, standing at the head of the community, had the relief work in charge, for which

office only the best men and descendants of the foremost families were elected according to an ancient Mishnah. We have here then the historical evidence that organized charity is older than Christianity.

But we have most accurate information about the Jewish system of relief as far back as Hillel's time; the principal rule was that no lover of God should live in a community that has no charity organization. The word used for organized charity is "*Kuppah*"—charity box;—this contained the funds for the support of the indigent townsmen, who every Friday received money for the meals for the whole week, besides clothing, and also of the transient poor who received as much as was needed for the day and on Sabbath for three meals.

Besides the treasury, they had what we would call a soup kitchen—*tamhoi*—a charity bowl for the keeping of victuals needed for immediate relief. The charity treasury was in charge of three trustees who decided on the worthiness of each case; for professional beggars received, at best, clothing, but rarely, if ever, money, while honorable persons and of good family in reduced circumstances were supported in accordance with their former station. For the collection of the money two men of the very highest standing were sent out, endowed with full power to tax the people and to seize their property, until the sum required was given. In order to avoid suspicion, these collectors were not allowed to separate while collecting or holding the money. These collections were made weekly. The victuals for the *tamhoi* were collected and distributed for immediate use

by three charity administrators. While regarded as the greatest honor, it was also a most delicate task to be administrator of charity, because the leading maxim was never to put the receiver to shame. Besides, he had to consider the meritoriousness of each claimant, and at the same time use caution against impostors. It is quite characteristic of the Jewish sentiment that a woman's claim was considered before that of a man, and that of the student of the law before that of an ignorant man, though he be of high rank. Non-Jewish poor of the city were also supported from the charity fund, while ill-reputed Jews were not treated as brothers. Also the duty of visiting the sick and burying the dead was extended to non-Jews who had none to take care of them. And here we come back to the first and fundamental Jewish principle of charity. It is human in character. Just as Abraham and Job, the shepherd sheiks, had the doors of their tents opened on all sides to receive men of all nationality under their hospitable roof according to tradition, so should charity be broad, a promoter of peace among men.

And here a word or two must be said regarding another institution of charity. All along it has been stated with apparent plausibility that, just as the name hospital is Roman, so did also this and similar institutions for the reception of the stranger and the sick originate in Rome and among the adherents of the Church. Thus says Lecky in his History of European Morals, following older writers. The fact is that St. Jerome, who was instrumental in the founding of the first sick house in Rome and of the first

inn for poor strangers in Ostia through the agency of Fabiola, a wealthy Roman convert to Christianity, expressly writes that he is happy to see "a branch of Abraham's terebinth transplanted from the East." That is to say, he acknowledges that he is not the originator, but a mere follower, and in referring to Abraham who, according to Rabbinical tradition, built under the oak at Hebron and the terebinth of Beersheba, an inn for strangers—Pandocheion—he implicitly gives credit to the Jews for having been the first hospital builders. This hospice or Stranger's Inn was open alike for the homeless and the sick who needed a shelter. And what was the name given by the Jews to the sickhouse and old people's home? All those here of the older generation know it, while the real importance of the name has not been recognized by the Jewish scholars. *Hekdesh* is the term; that is a house consecrated to the use of the poor —a term used by the old Essenes when they took their property and gave it to the poor, as was done afterwards by the early Christians. So the Jew, and not the Church, was the first to institutionalize charity. The Essene was the first who so practiced love that in his enthusiastic altruism he disregarded self, and gave all he had away.

And this lofty spirit of the Essenes was imbibed by the early Christians, whose ardor and self-denial converted the large pagan world to their faith. Yes, just as Abraham is pictured in the Midrash as having won the idolaters that passed his tent for the God he worshiped, by the charity he bestowed on them in his tent, so did the great Christian brotherhoods and sis-

terhoods win the heathen of the Roman empire for their gospel of love and hope by doing admirable and unique service to suffering humanity. And no sooner did the wealth and influence of noble-hearted Roman matrons and patricians flow into the channels of the rising Church, than those grand institutions of benevolence sprang up which redound to the lasting glory of Christendom. No impartial reader can peruse that chapter of Church history which narrates the heroic zeal with which, all through the middle ages, the great fraternities and the sisters of mercy endeavored to alleviate the ills and sufferings of humanity, without paying homage to those lofty angelic souls.

But while giving the church fullest praise for this meritorious work of unparalleled beneficence and for the new impetus and inspiration she gave to the world, we cannot exonerate her from the charge of narrow-minded exclusiveness and want of discretion and of practical common sense. A spirit of monkish world-contempt pervaded all her institutions, and made the object of charity not so much the relief of the sufferer, as the release of the giver's soul from the fires of hell. Lavishly given and thoughtlessly squandered away, it did not enrich, but pauperized humanity. Begging came to be considered a holier occupation than labor and industry. Did not the founder of Christianity encourage this medieval view by the well known saying: "Behold the birds of heaven, they sow not, neither do they reap, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Consider the lilies of the field. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed

like these. So be not anxious concerning your eating and drinking and clothing?"

Against such unhealthy views of life cherished by the Essenes as well as Christians, the rabbis wisely remonstrated, and as early as the second century they decreed that no one should give away to the poor more than the fifth part of all he had, and thus deprive himself of the means of self-support and self-respect. Nay more, they cautioned against fostering beggary and idleness, and recommended the advancing of money to honorable pursuers of a trade. "Better he who lends money than he who gives," they say, "because this encourages labor and dignifies man." In summing up the maxims of the Talmud, Maimonides counts eight different degrees of giving charity: The least is he who gives without good will; better is he who gives with good will, though not in accordance with his means. Better again is he who gives adequately, but not without being asked; higher ranks he who gives without being asked; higher again he who gives without knowing the recipient; higher still he who gives in secret, not letting the receivers know who their benefactor is; much higher yet he who gives, not knowing who is the recipient, nor letting the recipient know who is the giver. The highest of all is he who helps the poor along the road of self-help by advancing him money or procuring for him a lucrative occupation.

It was this sensible, practical, helpful charity that was chiefly practised by the Jew, although his heart was too sympathetic and tender to let the poor suppliant pass his door unaided. The history

of Jewish charity in the middle ages has not been written as yet, and will be difficult to write, since most of its pages, written with tears, have been torn out by the storms of persecution that swept over the head of the Wandering Jew. But what is left in scarcely known casual, casuistic and ethical writings shows it to have been continuous and constant, watchful, tender, yet wise care for the needy by the wealthier class. Often it was the history of one prominent successful man of enterprise and public spirit who founded the eleemosynary institutions of the city, and at the same time led the whole community from a state of poverty and dependence by ways of wise economy to self-help. A lover of God and man and high in favor with the rulers of State or country, he, the so-called Shtadlan, as a rule, promoted at the same time the cause of charity and of education, and the various *Hekdeshim*—hospitals, asylums, or poorhouses—occasionally perpetuate his name. In most cases, charity was the combined and systematized effort of the well-to-do and pious men of the community who, forming the various brotherhoods, made all, even the poorest, contribute their mite to the work of relief and the maintenance of the benevolent institutions. Throughout the medieval times, the *Maaser*, the tenth of the annual income, was the tax imposed upon all, and willingly paid by every law-abiding Jew. Yet however great the merit of alms-giving appeared in theory and tradition, one leading maxim preponderated in practice, the honor and self-respect as well as the respectability of the poorer classes were at all events to be main-

tained, and on every Sabbath Eve the indigent families were remembered by the rich, besides receiving their weekly support in money or victuals from the charity treasury. As far as we can trace the history of Jewish congregations, we find charitable societies organized for the support and the clothing of the poor, for the education of their children and especially for the nursing and training of the fatherless, for visiting the sick and for aiding the sick and the lying-in-women among the poor, for dowries for poor maidens, for sheltering the aged and homeless, for ransoming prisoners and for burying the dead, especially giving free burial to the poor. To become foster-parents to the orphans was at all times considered the highest act of charity, and therefore the founding of orphan asylums was not as frequent among the Jews as the founding of poor and sick houses. While institutionalized charity is Jewish in origin, personal service, personal care for, and personal interest in the poor, ever remained the *Leitmotif* of Jewish charity, which was always a beautiful combination of tender compassion and wise provision and helpfulness.

Modern times created new conditions and new needs. First of all the Reformation, leaning towards the far sounder and healthier Old Testament principles of morals, gradually led to a better comprehension of the scope and object of charity. Then came the age of reason with its insistence upon the claims of man and its opposition to the exclusive narrowness of sectarianism, and made philanthropy, in its broadest sense, the aim and standard of charity.

Under the influence of this ruling idea of the last century, all benevolent and educational institutions were reorganized and remodeled, and new means and methods of physical, moral and intellectual elevation and emancipation of the poor and forsaken were created. No one caught this spirit of broad philanthropy more eagerly than the Jew, and he was quick in lending to all his eleemosynary institutions this character of broad humanity, ingrained in his soul from the time of Abraham.

At the beginning of the last century the tendency was to specialize the various works and measures of charity and, under the supervision and auspices of the Jewish congregation or community, to start special societies for each. Homes for the Aged and Infirm and for convalescents, asylums for the deaf and dumb as well as for the orphans, homes for destitute, neglected and delinquent children, soup kitchens and similar organizations sprang up in Germany, England, France, and elsewhere, under various managements. To-day the cry is for centralization of all communal charities, nay, for the centralization of all relief work in State and country, in order to prevent fraud, mischief and pauperization. But in the same measure as philanthropy and scientific methods came into play, the religious character of the work seemed to be infringed upon, and its connection with congregational life was loosened, if not altogether severed. Let me not forget to mention in this connection our congregational sisterhoods, which form a connecting link between the united relief work of the community and the congregation, while at the same time giving

the work the ardor and enthusiasm of religion, the service of self-sacrificing love and the element of personal friendship and sympathy for the needy.

But the age of reason and cosmopolitan humanitarianism has given way to an age of social unrest and industrial strife, and the congested cities present a continual warfare between the masses and the classes, between labor and capital, between employer and employees. "We want no charity; we want the means of getting a decent livelihood," is the cry of the many poverty-stricken to the few privileged ones, in whose hands the wealth of the nation is accumulating with ever increasing power and peril. Charity to-day is confronted with problems which become ever graver, as the life of society becomes ever more complex. The old methods of giving, especially those indulged in by the Church which offers bread in the one hand and the gospel in the other, have been discarded and condemned as lowering the dignity of both man and religion. All individual and sporadic relief has been found harmful, and the cry is not merely for a systematic, but above all for a scientific mode of charity, for a beneficence which helps rather than gives, which uplifts instead of humiliating, which awakens self-esteem and develops a spirit of manhood in the beneficiary. It is on this principle that not only relief work, but also our hospitals and homes for the aged, and our orphan asylums and kindred institutions are being rebuilt and reshaped. Charity is becoming more and more an integral part of sociology; it is a study of the relation of man to man. Nay, more, it has

ceased to be a mere outpouring of altruistic sentiment; it tends more and more towards a recognition of mutual interest and mutual responsibility. All these problems of the age, all these wants and woes of the suffering and struggling masses—"die Massen-Noth, das Massen-Elend," are aggravated in the case of the Jew. Persecution and wholesale immigration multiply the difficulty and increase the danger of congested city life a thousand fold, and the great question is, what about our Jewish charity? What about our much-vaunted Jewish sympathy and the Jewish heart, when we stand face to face with thousands and tens of thousands of hapless beings who appeal to us as brothers and fellow-creatures for relief from crying want. Does scientific charity, does sociology offer the all-sufficient remedy, the solution of the problem?

It seems to me that my historical review of Jewish charity is incomplete and of no intrinsic value whatsoever, if it does not suggest an answer to this most vexatious question of to-day. Yet I think it does. The Jewish principle of charity is in fullest harmony with what is called the science of charity. It is sociological. It voices the law of justice. It demands in the name of God, the Ordainer of life, a full share of the possessions of the fortunate for those defeated in the race. It declares the ownership of great wealth to be a misappropriation of God's gifts before the tribunal of highest justice, unless it is regarded as a stewardship for the purpose of alleviating in adequate measure the wants of the masses. But science is a cold, calculating array of ciphers and dates. It lacks the warmth of the heart, the power of the emotion,

the joy of self-sacrifice which the word charity implies. Jewish charity is that deep sense of mutual responsibility which weaves its golden threads of love and sympathy around individuals and communities, rendering the weal of the one and the woe of the other the warp and the woof in the loom of the social fabric, whose foundation stones, taken from God's throne, are justice and righteousness. Yes, the Jewish question to-day is a social question; it is the question of justice in human society, and this question will not be solved by running away, as the agnostic here and the Zionist there does. It will be solved only, if the Jew rises to the great emergency of the hour and becomes a high priest of justice, a perfect type and model of righteousness; if he realizes that the very name Jew—Jehudah—involves responsibility for all those beneath him in the social scale, first of his own kind, and then of all mankind. Yes, the Jew has ever been, and more than ever before he must be—the exponent and practiser of a philanthropy rooted in justice, and the present crisis is to stimulate the Jew to greater energy and greater efforts toward charity and social justice. Of Abraham the Rabbinical legend tells that he wore a jewel on his breast, by the lustre of which he cured the sick and relieved the ailing, and ere he died, he hung it upon the sky, saying: "Let henceforth each who suffers look up to the orb of light, whence this jewel received its splendor, and be cured." That jewel, methinks, was cosmopolitan philanthropy, charity in the garb of righteousness. May it in undimmed splendor ever shine on the Jewish breast, and cheer suffering and struggling humanity!

21.

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.*

MIRACLE is the dearest child of faith. "Das Wunder ist des Glauben's liebstes Kind" is a saying of Goethe's. Miracles, or extraordinary acts which excel the skill and comprehension of man, are everywhere offered as proofs of divine omnipotence in support of faith, yet as soon as you accept them as proofs, you cannot help feeling that you have staked the best and the holiest part of faith on mere chance. Your faith has not gained in the least by its mere acceptance. Suppose the Egyptian sorcerers had outstripped Moses in the art of performing wonders, would the truth have been on the side of Egypt rather than of Israel? Each religion claims the same miraculous power for its own prophets or saints. What is the difference between the water of Lourdes, by which the Catholic religion in France wins converts to-day, and the healing powers of the Jordan's water, by which Elijah converted the Syrian general Naaman?

If miracles are to testify to the fact that Moses or Elijah were men of God, then Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha have equal claims to offer. As Moses Mendelssohn wrote to Lavater who had challenged him to either disprove Bonnet's evidences of Chris-

*Lecture delivered before the Temple Emanu-El-Bible Class, New York, 1892.

tianity or become a Christian: "Miracles cannot prove the truth of a religion, because every religion has such to present, and the Mosaic law expressly warns against being misled by miracles performed by false prophets." The Jewish religion does not rest on belief in miracles. It rests on the intrinsic truth of its laws. "If a prophet doth wonders while saying: 'Worship another god!' hearken not unto him, for thy God is testing thy belief in Him," says the Law.

Consequently miracles play a subordinate role in Judaism. The rabbis saw the danger of placing trust in miracles, especially since Christianity was so prolific in these stories, and they deprecated them, laying all the greater stress on the cosmic unity and order established by the Creator from the very beginning.

And here is another point which must be emphasized. Every miracle is an interference with the laws of the universe, a stoppage of the entire system of creation. For a man to restore a dead person to life, or to make iron swim on the water's surface, or to fly from earth to heaven, is tantamount to allowing, in favor of a single person, the suspension of the entire machinery by which suns and stars, the organic and inorganic lives of aeons are kept rolling throughout the infinitude of space and time. And what purpose would such a temporary cessation of the entire empire of law in the universe serve? Can it prove the omnipotence of God? An all-knowing and almighty Creator must provide for every emergency, for every part of the infinite world

at the very beginning of things. He cannot allow breaks and interventions to lay bare the insufficiency of His work. The order of the Eternal must necessarily suffice for all eternity, or else we cannot have perfect trust in Him. Instead of confirming and strengthening our faith in God, miracles weaken it, because they allow chance and caprice to take the place of immutable law and order. In order to avoid this difficulty, our ancient rabbis in the Mishnah and Midrash declared that, at the very creation of the world, God provided for these miraculous alterations of nature by preparing the conditions for such contingencies. Under usual circumstances no animal could open its mouth to speak, but the ass of Balaam was a special work of the Almighty Creator, and so was the mouth of the earth that swallowed Korah in the wilderness, or the rock that yielded water to Israel in the desert, and so forth.

You see here how the ancient sages of Israel, far from insisting on a blind belief in miracles, endeavored to harmonize the Biblical stories with the postulates of reason, with an enlightened faith in an all-wise and all-ruling Providence. And when the great Jewish sages of the middle ages had come into contact with Arabian philosophy and science, basing the very belief in God's unity upon the immutable cosmic order and law, miracle became a problem rather than a proof, a difficulty more than a demonstration of faith. Nature as a marvelous unit, and history as a succession of mighty acts of Divine Providence—these are the miracles which manifest everywhere the omnipresence and omnipotence of

God. Revelation itself is a miracle, the greatest in life. The miracle stories we need lay no stress on. This is their mode of reasoning. Spinoza, in denying the very possibility of miracles, only went a step or two beyond what Maimonides and others had said.

Our attitude as Jews to the miracles of the Bible is, therefore, an altogether different one from that of the Christian believer. Take away the miracle of resurrection, of incarnation and transfiguration, reduce Christ to human size and his doings to human proportions, and Christianity becomes identical with the faith of the Jewish prophets and sages, a section of Judaism. Take away all the miracles told of Moses or Elijah, of Joshua and Daniel, and nothing essential of the Jewish truth is infringed upon. We are, consequently, at liberty to treat miracles, like any other form of belief, from a general human point of view. We are not bound to believe that the serpent in Paradise spoke, or that the diversity of human speech originated in the confusion of men's language at the Tower of Babel. We know that the Bible contains legends which present truth in the form of fiction. We do not for a moment accept the story as a fact that the Dead Sea owes its origin to the wrath of divine justice which visited the people of Sodom and Gomorrha with an earthquake; or that the wife of Lot turned into a pillar of salt, because she stopped in her flight to look back. On the contrary, the pillar of salt, still seen in one corner of the lake, because it is forming ever anew, gave rise to a popular tale concerning Lot's wife, and the awful sight of a dreary and desolate land covered with salt

and brimstone suggested the story of wicked inhabitants who had provoked the anger of God. Where science asks for natural causes, the narrator of the Bible looks for ethical motives. In like manner the Bible stories invest every occurrence in nature or in history with a religious significance.

We strike here upon the very nature of miracles. They turn every fact in the life of the man or the nation they dwell on into a lesson, a symbol of some religious truth. Miracles do not create, but illustrate, faith. They are the efflorescence, not the root, the beautiful blossom, not the nourishing sap, of belief. Every bright day begins with the charm of a beautiful sunrise. So does poetry in every nation precede the real facts of history and philosophy. Miracles are the poetry of religion, the garb in which the religious truth is presented to, or received by, the childhood of humanity.

The child likes to indulge in dreams, in fanciful stories, in fairy tales. Its imagination, defying the limits of real life, delights in soaring in the boundless realm of the ideal. It sees the world *not as it is*, but as it *should be*, or *might be*. And behold, life appears impregnated with moral purposes, and in the great contest the good always triumphs, and the evil is crushed; for God does what He pleases. His resources to help the just and to punish the evildoer are unlimited. In this stage of human conception miracles rise and spread. They are neither invented nor distorted facts, but popular traditions which reflect more or less dimly some historical reminiscence, but always viewed in the light of an

inner religious experience. You must be in sympathy with the faith that created the miracle, in order to appreciate its truth. Unless you can enjoy the beauty of the rainbow, you fail to see in it more than a reflection of the sun. Only a poetic age could behold in it the ark of heaven suspended as a sign of peace after the storm and uproar of nature.

This sense for the beautiful the rationalist lacks who reduces the Biblical miracle to a natural occurrence, holding for instance, that Israel's passage through the Red Sea followed by destruction of Pharaoh's hosts was due to a temporary ebb and flood which Moses had taken into account, but not Pharaoh; or that the downfall of Jericho's walls was caused by some stratagem of Joshua effecting their undermining. In a similar manner some would explain the grand act of Divine Revelation on Mount Sinai by referring to the deep and multifarious resonance heard there at times, owing to falling sand, and the mighty echo of Moses thus produced, they would say, could really be ascribed to God on high. All these rationalistic explanations, which deprive Biblical history of its poetic charm, are not only extremely silly in themselves, but they represent the great prophets of Israel as jugglers and impostors, and God himself as aiding or instructing in the art of trickery and deceit. In order to save the literal truth, they kill the very spirit of faith.

Let me, before proceeding to offer a better explanation, ask you: Why do miracles still gain currency in certain districts in Southern France and Italy and not among cultured people? Simply because

there they are expected and regarded as possible, whereas people, trained to behold in nature an unbroken reign of law, look only for natural explanations of whatever occurs. We know what life and death, health and disease are, and we understood the law long before Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, and before the microscope disclosed to us microbic germs of disease. Consequently we do not expect to be cured of leprosy or of blindness by some supernatural influence. But people who ascribe illness to evil spirits taking possession of man find no difficulty in using charms and magic formulas to drive off the malign influences. Here you have the key to all the New Testament miracles. Resurrection of the dead is for reasoning people to-day scarcely thinkable. We see the body lapse into dissolution, the moment the clockwork of life stops. But I remember as a child to have freely cherished the belief that during sleep at night the soul goes up to heaven to return in the morning. Then it was quite natural for me to expect that, when my body goes to its eternal sleep, the soul will wait in heaven for the summons of God to enter the body imbedded in the soil.

For us who know how by the unfailing law of gravitation sun, earth, moon and stars rotate around each other along the heavens, it is simply impossible to imagine that at Joshua's bidding the sun should have stood still in his course one day. Shall I tell you what the rising and the setting of the sun was to the ancient mind? A picture found on one of the temple gates of Nineveh shows heavenly spirits

pulling a mighty rope by which the gates of the eastern horizon are opened, and the brilliant orb of day is let in in the morning and let out in the evening. How easy then for Joshua by his divine power for once to stop the heavenly spirits in their work of pulling the ropes of the sun, or of driving this golden chariot along the sky!

We to-day see in rain and storm, hail or snow, lightning or earthquake the unceasing work of one will and mind governing the universe. For us a break means return to chaos. But for those who believed that there were, as Job has it, "storehouses of rain and dew, of snow and hail in heaven waiting for God to unlock them and send them down ever anew, either for the weal or for the woe of the land," every shower of rain and every draught was a special act or interference of God. Hence it was perfectly in His power to alter the course of things in favor of one land and against the interest of another.

But on entering into the psychology of the Biblical miracles, we must analyze also their forms and contents and find their historical and local connections. Without a study of the land and the beliefs of Egypt and of the Sinai peninsula and their history, we are at a loss to explain the wonders of the Exodus and of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness.

Most people forget that the Bible is not a catechism with fixed definitions of God and soul. It is a nation's history and poetry. It shows religion in the state of evolution. The truth is seen there growing and maturing, but not finished and perfect. Of course, when we speak of Divine Revelation, we cannot help

thinking of the spirit of man communing with the Spirit of the universe by means of profound meditation, or by some other flight of the soul aspiring to the highest and loftiest. The fire in which God appears to Moses in the bush, or the thunder and lightning in which God reveals Himself to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai simply puzzle and perplex us. How can we harmonize the spirituality or omnipresence of God with His coming down to some earthly locality? But the matter becomes still more puzzling when we read how, before announcing the ten plagues to Pharaoh, God gives Moses instruction in the art of turning a staff into a serpent and water into blood, and similar magic. Nor is the story of the ten plagues and particularly the last one, the death of the first-born, with the anterior command to Israel to borrow gold and silver vessels from the Egyptians before their departure, in accord with our conception of God. A philosophical debate between Moses and the wise men of Egypt would have appeared to us as a far more appropriate introduction to the new religious truth disclosed on Sinai. Instead of this, the Bible unrolls before us a mighty warfare between the gods of Egypt and the lofty God of Sinai. It is a strange contest between a simple deity of a shepherd tribe and the numerous gods that created the highest civilization then reached by man. It has been said by Jewish writers of old and repeated in the New Testament that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt. The Scriptures tell nothing of the kind. On the contrary, Moses' faith conquered the world by its very simplicity while Egypt's religion, like all polytheism, defeated the truth by its complicated multiplicity.

Now what is a simple faith? Not a god so remote from human life that only philosophers can think him out, but a God who is near to every one, and who helps whenever He is called upon. This is exactly the meaning of Jahveh: *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh.* Such a god cannot be invented. He must have been known as the God of the fathers. He must have been worshiped for generations right there, where He first appeared to Moses. Indeed, Mount Sinai was the hill of God, a place of pilgrimage, long before Moses' time—perhaps a thousand years.

Heavenward we gaze when we long for the Infinite. How natural, then, for the shepherd to find his God dwelling on lofty heights, unseen, yet giving signs of His presence in fire and whirlwind! How much grander is the Lord of the heavenly hosts and of the vast desert than all the gods enshrined in the Egyptian temples! The ten plagues are climatic phenomena of Egypt put into dramatic form. They all come from the surrounding desert: the hot wind that blinds the eyes, the insects and impurities that fill the air with germs of disease and pestilence, the earth that reddens the waters of the Nile. How powerless are the gods and the men of Egypt against the Ruler of the free and vast desert!

We know from the Egyptian monuments that the Hebrews who resided in Goshen, the border-land of the wilderness, worshiped the god of life, using as his image a bald-headed serpent, attended by two priestesses. We understand thus why Moses started on his great mission with the sign of the serpent. Not the serpent with his two priestesses, who could

not give you back your freedom, I proclaim to you as God. No, says he, the God of Sinai, He shall redeem you, and Him shall you worship with the very silver and gold vessels borrowed from your masters. He, the Ruler of the heavens, will smite the gods of Egypt and set you free. He will avenge on Pharaoh the death of Israel's children, His first-born, by killing the first-born of Egypt. Nay, more. Exactly as Jahveh in ancient poetry appears in fire-clouds when combating with Rahab, the power of darkness, or the great serpent of night, so does He pursue the mighty host of Pharaoh or Egypt, the great serpent, until they sink into the deep. To His ransomed ones, the people of Israel, however, He appears on Sinai in the garb of His glory, to reveal to them His law and consecrate them to be His priests forever.

On the Sinai peninsula there falls every year in spring the Manna sap in white globules upon the ground, and the Bedouins call this sweet juice Mann Essamma—gift of heaven. Some call it "angel's bread." Who else but the Ruler of the desert, the great Jahveh, could have offered this as food to His people? Annually at the very same time large flights of quails are seen coming to nestle there, and they say that the sun-god awakens from his slumber at their arrival. This, too, then, and the water that flows out of the dry rock, are gifts of Jahveh, the God of Sinai.

Likewise is the whole story of the conquest by Joshua and the wondrous battle fought by Elijah nothing but the poetic conception of the warfare of Sinai's God who has storm, fire and whirlwind at

His command, against the giants and the gods of Canaan. "Jahveh is the great God who gives rain and withholds it at his pleasure, not Baal!" This is the grand truth expressed in the miraculous contest carried on by Elijah on Mount Carmel against Jezebel's prophets of Baal. The God of Sinai is a devouring fire to annihilate all injustice and wrong, and a pillar of light to lead the righteous to the land of promise. Even on the last day of judgment God will judge the world by fire of righteousness and purify man like silver and gold in the furnace, before the universal reign of peace will unite all His children. Think of Elijah's last moments on earth! He was seen by his pupil Elisha riding upon a chariot of fire drawn by fiery horses to heaven. Was this not originally the fiery cherub on which Israel's God Jahveh rode along the sky? But the idea of God had become too sublime to allow such mythical forms to be attached any longer to Him. The chariot therefore, fell to the lot of the prophet. But it still symbolized that wrath of God against an idolatrous nation of which the whole life of Elijah was an embodiment. The God of Isaiah dwelt no longer on Sinai. His residence is the heaven above, and even there He is no longer seen, not even by the angelic beings that surround him. Henceforth the world of miracles ceases. All the more is the past invested with the miraculous. The beginnings of history, the very origin of the nation, become a succession of wonders. Did God then recede from the lives of men? Was the wondrous working arm of God no longer with the Jew? The priestly Sadducees, the worldly Jews, said: No. The

pious ones in their tribulations and trials protested, and so the miraculous story of Daniel came forth as a testimony that the God of Israel was still near and ready to save in a miraculous way from the fire of the persecutor and from the claws of lions.

Taken altogether, the Biblical miracles offer sublime truths in child-like form. They illustrate in symbolical language the ideas of Divine Justice and of benign Providence. As long as the human heart remains young and eager to listen to eternal truths in parable, the Bible with its miracle tales will remain mankind's indestructible picture-book. It is not a text-book of history, nor of philosophy. It is all poetry, which is often the sublimest truth, as every ideal world is loftier than the real. For, after all, is the heart not a more potent factor of humanity than the intellect? Is not emotion a stronger power than cold reflection? Behind all reason, all knowledge and skill, lies the power of faith which moves mountains, which performs wonders. Faith in God and the divine forces within us achieves the best things and the greatest in life. There is a saving power in faith at which all miracles hint. Faith makes prophets, heroes, artists, explorers and discoverers. One with God, we are all-powerful; without God, we are pigmies. Greater than the miracle of the Red Sea is the wonder of Divine Providence seen in our every day life, say the rabbis. Our age of enterprising self-reliance and of iron machinery repudiates miracles, and justly so. All the more we must needs learn how to behold in the entire life of the universe a complex of wonders, one great miracle

of divine forethought before which we should stand in holy awe, realizing the sway of a divine power by which man imbues life with holy purposes and lofty ideals, the rule of a God whose truth triumphs in the end. Amen.

22.

THE NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION.*

THIS is, indeed, a memorable event in the history of American Judaism which we are celebrating. We greatly appreciate the honor you, our honored hosts and friends, bestow upon us to-night, in view of the work we have done. But it is only with your generous aid that we shall succeed in rendering the Bible, whose translation we have finished, a welcome boon and a valued household treasure in every Jewish home in America.

All the great Bible translations made throughout the lands and the ages marked a new epoch in the history of the Jew, or the world at large, whether we think of Mendelssohn's work, so instrumental in breaking down the Ghetto walls for the modern Jew, or the Greek translation in Alexandria, which inaugurated a new era for Jew and Gentile by the blending of the beauty of Hellenic culture with the lofty spirit of the Hebrew's faith, or whether we have in mind Luther's Bible and the King James' Version which worked as liberators of the mind of Germany here, of England there. In the *seventy* languages of the *seventy* nations of the globe should the words of God be written, in order that all may learn the

*Spoken at the dinner given in New York in honor of the Editorial Board of the new Bible Translation, February 10, 1914.

truth of God's Fatherhood and man's brotherhood, say our rabbis. The Book of Books should be in the hands of all, monitor and comforter of high and low, the educator of mankind, the unifier of men, the greatest democratizing power of humanity.

In this spirit have we been working together to bring the Bible within easy reach of the highest and lowliest, man, woman and child, hoping and trusting that, like the great Christian Bible Societies, we, too, would succeed in getting millions at our disposal for the sacred cause.

Now at first blush, I was rather embarrassed and puzzled when seeing the subject assigned to me: "The Bible for the Student." Why, it is a *Bible for the People* that we wanted to create. We live in an age when the scholar in his study or the scientist in his laboratory is expected to place his best faculties and energies at the service of common humanity. How much more so the student of the Bible, which is the holiest concern of all!

On closer reflection, however, I came to the conclusion that I should speak on my subject by way of contrast.

You all probably know that for the student the Scriptural words have different meanings according to the standpoint of each. The medieval rabbis speak of four different methods of interpretation to bring out either the *simple* or the *symbolic*, the *homiletic* (that is Halakic or Haggadic) *or mystic* sense. The older sages speak of 49 different methods. Yes, just as the diamond reflects its brilliancy in dozens of facets flashing forth light in many direc-

tions, so has the Torah 49 faces of the truth to offer to the student. Yet beneath all these the simple meaning must ever remain as the basic one appealing to all.

Thus the theological students of the various schools differ as to concept or interpretation of Scripture; in regard to the plain text we all, conservative or liberal, agree. As *students* we had our heated controversies, our sore defeats and proud victories each; as *workers at a Bible for the people* we were ready for a compromise and become all of *one* accord.

Another important consideration for the student is the Hebrew text itself, concerning which ancient tradition records many variations. And these have been greatly increased in number and in significance, since we have learned to compare the ancient versions with our Masoretic text, not to speak of the independent text criticism of modern days. Many a student, even among the conservatives, keeps in his closet a Bible edition interleaved, noting his emendations of the text, which are greatly at variance with those of his fellow-workers. Now over against these varieties of the Bible text or its translations, which disfigure the sacred Scripture by lacunae, asterisks or interrogation points, and occasionally by the transposition of entire verses and chapters, however legitimate in themselves, or sanctioned by ancient practice, *the Bible for the People* must leave the Masoretic text *intact*, in order to manifest profound regard for the venerable authority of the Book of Books, of which we cannot afford to offer 57 varieties. This was one of the principles which guided us in our translation.

Again, it is a well-known fact that each student has a certain predilection in regard to the words he uses or the explanation of Scriptural terms. When, accordingly, following the plan pursued by the former Board of Bible Editors, consisting of the late Dr. Jastrow, Dr. De Sola Mendes and myself, the various books of the Bible were assigned to different translators, there was evidently too much individualism shown in the rendering of each book, at the expense of the uniformity and harmony of the whole. It was, therefore, a wise step taken by our Board of Editors in following as closely as possible the standard of the Authorized Version, thereby to preserve the classical English diction with all the vigor and rhythmic beauty which only the inspiration of genius could produce, and at the same time to safeguard the uniformity of the translation. As *students* we might have displayed in many instances greater originality; as workers at a *Bible for the People*, we gladly yielded in favor of a translation which created the God-fearing, liberty-loving race of men that made England and North America what they are. In one respect however, we approach our work as students equipped with the ammunition of modern research. Just as the Revised Version, the work of modern English and American scholars, represents, aside from a few Christological features that have still been left here and there, the advanced *scientific* character of modern Biblical exegesis, so does our translation, the result of independent studies with especial consultation also of Jewish tradition and Jewish authorities, offer to the Jewish world the Scriptures in modern English

upon a thorough *scientific* basis, *free* from any sectarianism or any Jewish *bias*. It is a Jewish Bible only in so far as it takes cognizance of the Synagogue usage regarding the order of books and the divisions of the Pentateuchal Sabbath portions and their Hebrew nomenclatures. Aside from this, it presents itself as the translation of the Scripture pure and simple, and we confidently expect that non-Jewish scholars will use it with profit in future revisions of their own versions, since as Jewish students we frequently succeeded in penetrating deeper into the spirit of the Hebrew original than did translators less conversant with the Hebrew diction.

Thus our work is truly a peace-offering to both the Jewish and the non-Jewish world. Being the result of harmonious co-operation between the representatives of the two wings of American Judaism, the Conservative and the Reform wing, it will, we hope and trust, form a bond of union between all the branches and divisions of American Israel, to bring about a greater consolidation of its spiritual interests, and at the same time serve as a link to entwine us also with our God-seeking non-Jewish brethren throughout the English-speaking world. Yes, as Jewish students we are mindful of the word of our sages: "The disciples of the wise will increase the world's peace, for it is said, All thy children will be taught of God, and great shall then be the peace of thy children, the up-builders of the divine kingdom of truth."

23.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE ON JUDAISM.*

WOMAN'S social position has often been called the barometer of civilization. Her state of subjection or of freedom indicates the degree of culture which a people or an age has attained. But there are two different aspects of the question. Liberty of the individual is one; the purity and welfare of the home is another. Occidental life lays more stress on the former, Oriental life on the latter. No doubt, the ancient civilization of the world produced a higher standard of beauty, but did morality hold pace with its progress? One of the saddest impressions made by Greek history is that the advance of its culture marked the decline of virtue. The beautiful types of women of the Homeric age, such as Andromache and Penelope, are looked for in vain among the enlightened people of Athens. Still greater was the fall of woman in Rome. Beginning with the lofty spirit of a Cornelia, she sinks to the level of a Messalina.

The Jew offered the world a new and higher standard of morality—the principle of holiness. Just as light is born out of darkness, so was the conception of a God of holiness, who abhors everything impure, born out of the contest against the abominable

*Address delivered before the Cincinnati Section of the Council of Jewish Women, in 1906.

Semitic idol-worship. The pure monotheistic faith of the Jew is the efflorescence and fruitage of his pure moral sentiment and his domestic virtue. The shocking immoralities perpetrated at the shrine of the gods and goddesses of Canaan and Chaldea induced him to barricade his house against the vices prevailing round about him. The exclusivism of the law had the preservation of the patriarchal virtue of chastity for its object. Whenever the purity of home life is threatened in Biblical times, there is a cry of alarm sounded throughout the camp of Israel that rallies each and all in defence of its honor.

But while it is universally recognized that the Jewish woman created a model home life, the general impression is that her influence on Judaism at large amounted to very little; that only in single instances was her power felt, but for the rest she was, like any other Oriental woman, pushed into the background and forced to inactivity. It is my endeavor, therefore, to show that in many respects woman lent Judaism the character it has, and that her influence, deep and silent like the warmth of the sun, has ever been in the ascendant.

Beginning with Biblical times, we find the Hebrew woman at once occupy a far more dignified position than does the women of other nations. True, the story of Eden holds Eve responsible for the fate, or fall, of man—a Chaldean legend which has its counterpart in the Greek tale of fair Pandora, whose curiosity causes all the ills of life to come forth out of the fatal chest, to the chagrin of man, and leave only hope as last solace; also in the Zoroastrian story

which makes woman the very ally of the Evil One. Still, the Bible does not accentuate her guilt so much as her frailty. On the other hand, the story of her formation out of Adam's rib is but a poetical presentation of her equality and partnership with man. In point of fact, compared with the women in India, Persia, and Greece who were never allowed to partake of the social life the men enjoyed, nor even of their meals, the Hebrew woman possesses an enviable degree of power and freedom. She moves about with perfect ease and participates in the social or public life. Especially noteworthy is the fact, rarely met with among other tribes, that she is beloved and respected for her personal qualities. The Biblical stories dwell with special emphasis upon the beauty and wisdom in which the women of the patriarchal or monarchical age excel. While the preservation of kin, the obtaining of worthy heirs, is the chief consideration in the choice of a wife, woman is loved for her own sake, and we hear it testified by Jacob and Elkanah that this love is more to them than the possession of children. And this sentiment of pure love finds its expression everywhere in the prophetic writings as well as in Hebrew poetry, and even in the law. What greater mark of respect can be shown to the wife than is offered in the law which ordains that the man who has betrothed a wife, but not yet wedded her, should be exempt from going to war? Much has been written regarding polygamy in the Bible. The fact is that it is condemned on the first page as being in conflict with the design of the Creator, who made woman to

be a helpmate and consort to man. But the legislator who deals with real facts, not with mere ideals, clearly points to the possible evil results arising from such a state, when speaking of a case where the one wife is loved and the other disliked, and in the ensuing discord the law must, by all means, protect the rights of the disliked one. In fact, every deviation from the divinely-ordained monogamous marriage in the Bible records is either accompanied by some plea or excuse, as in the story of Abraham and Jacob, or followed by some penalty in the shape of discord and strife.

Is there anything in the world's literature as touching as the love the prophet Hosea harbors in his breast for his wife, even after she has proven faithless to him? That love revealed to his troubled mind the profundity of God's all-forgiving love and mercy for His people with all their failings. Even the stern law dealing with divorce does not for a moment assume that a man would send off his wife, unless she had by her conduct given him sufficient reason to justify the separation. In reading the Bible we must not overlook the fact that the laws and customs of a nation cannot be changed with one stroke. Throughout antiquity woman was claimed by man as his property. When given in marriage by father or kinsman, she only changed masters; a will of her own she had not. But while the law remained the same, the spirit of the people, of prophet and law-giver, tended toward elevating her to a higher position and recognizing her personality, her individual claims. Rebecca was

asked whether she would go with Eliezer to be Isaac's wife. Likewise, while the Mosaic law of adultery applies only to the woman that is faithless to her husband, and not to the husband who is faithless to his wife, we find the prophet Malachi rebuke with unsparing bitterness the husband who deals treacherously with his wife, and takes a stranger in her place.

A careful study of the laws prohibiting kin-marriages, such as were allowed and fostered among other nations, also discloses the underlying motive of freeing woman from the bondage of the clan, and rendering marriage an institution based on the full recognition of woman as the free, congenial life-partner of man.

In one respect, however, the influence of the Hebrew woman has been exaggerated. Miriam, Deborah, Hulda and the wise woman of Tokoa have been pointed out as typical representatives of the woman in Israel. The fact is that everywhere in primitive times woman played a prominent part as diviner and seer. Her receptive and intuitive nature, her emotional powers, bring her into closer contact with the mysterious side of life, and render her the medium or exponent of those occult forces of the spirit that manifest themselves in all ages and phases of humanity under some form of religious belief. Hagar and the wife of Manoah, as well as Magdalene in the New Testament, have visions of angels, while the men see nothing of the kind. The same psychic force that produces fortune-tellers and witches gives on a higher stage the

impulse to prophecy. So there is nothing specifically Hebrew in woman appearing as prophetess. But there is another side to this religious proclivity of the Hebrew woman, which has not received the attention it deserves. Notice the household gods, the *Teraphim*, which Rachael steals from her father, or which Michal, the daughter of King Saul, keeps in her house as David's wife. See with what readiness the mother of Micah hands forth her silver for the making of an idol, and the women of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai give up their jewels for the making of the Golden Calf. Listen attentively to the speeches of Amos and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel addressed to the daughters of Israel, and to what law-giver and historian say regarding the heathenish practices to which the people adhered to the very last, in defiance of all prophetic monition and menace of divine anger. The heathenish, the idolatrous woman was Israel's stumbling-block all through the pre-exilic ages. Hebraism—thus I call the history of Israel previous to the exile—in spite of the great prophets that appeared illumining the wide world with the truth flashed forth by their visions, was a failure, because the Hebrew woman was not trained for her task of guarding Israel's treasure. Miriam, the sister of Moses, voiced the true sentiment when she, in common with her brother Aaron, rebuked Moses for having taken an Ethiopian wife, and, when called to account for such lack of respect, said: "Hath the Lord spoken only through Moses and not also through us?" This sentiment became the regenerating force when Ezra and Nehemiah resorted to the

rather cruel measure of expelling the heathen wives from the new Judean colony. It was an unheard-of proceeding, militating against the practice of the preceding centuries. But it was an amputation necessary to save the main body of the Jews. It is true that, by crushing all heathen alliances and forcing all such priests and people as married heathen women out of the Jewish camp, Ezra and Nehemiah created a narrower faith than the one the prophets had preached and the law-giver had contemplated. Still they rendered Judaism the greatest possible service by giving it Jewish wives and Jewish mothers to build up Jewish homes. "The hallowing of the home," says Israel Abrahams in his "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages" was one of the earliest factors in the development of Judaism after the Babylonian Exile, and monogamy grew up then as a flower on the family hearth. Monogamy was the result, not the cause, of the idealized conception of the family relations." Indeed, Judaism begins a new, a higher and holier life the moment the Jewess, consecrated anew to her task as priestess of the fireside, enters the home to become its sole ruler. What is it that made Judaism so different from any other religion? Nay, what distinguishes Judaism, since the Babylonian Exile, so essentially from Mosaism, or the Law laid down in the written books of Moses? What gave the Sabbath and festivals, the home life, the table, the entire private and social life of the Jew their peculiar character? It seems to me that these points have never been carefully considered in connection with my theme: Woman. If we had nothing

else but that song of the Virtuous Woman at the close of the Book of Proverbs, the like of which the literature of no other nation possesses, that alone would be sufficient testimony to the spirit of domestic affection the Jewess engendered. So does the very fact that the name by which the wife was called by the Jews in Talmudical time—*debetha*, "the Mistress of Home"—show that in the position accorded to her she had no rival. But I claim more for the Jewish woman of those days. I maintain that she was the main factor and regenerator of the religious life of the Jew. The rabbis say that the piety of the Jewish woman worked as the redeeming power when the Hebrews were in Egyptian bondage. The Midrashic saying reflects the inner life of the Jew during the critical times of Syrian and Roman oppression and vice. Read the books of the Maccabees or the book of Judith, and you find that there were many mothers who, like Hannah with her seven sons, would die rather than break the covenant of the fathers. The Jewish women were the first to undergo martyrdom in the cause of their religion during persecution. So we read of many Jewish women in later times distinguished by great piety. One of them, the wife of Abba Hilkia, the grandson of Onias the Saint, so excelled her husband in fear of God and love of man that, when they both prayed for rain during the time of a great drought, her prayer was, according to the story, heard first. Beruria, the wife of Rabbi Meir, who lived three generations later, would not allow her husband to curse the vile crowd, since "God hated the sins of man, but not the sinners."

Ostensibly the example of domestic piety and virtue displayed by the Jewish women impressed their heathen neighbors, and won them in large numbers for the Jewish faith. Thus we learn from Josephus that almost all the women of the Syrian city of Damascus were attached to the Jewish religion. It is remarkable that, before Christianity entered the world as a proselytizing power, heathen women of the highest rank, such as Queen Helen of Adiabene and Nero's wife Poppea, and many others whose names are preserved in Talmudic literature and on Roman catacombs, espoused the Jewish faith either as perfect converts, or as semi-proselytes. What then made Judaism so attractive to woman especially? My answer is: The Jewish home with its bright joy, its Sabbath light, its festive family gathering, and its high standard of purity, and last but not least, the dignity it accorded to woman. Of these Sabbath lights and festal meals, Roman poets like Persius and philosophers like Seneca speak in mocking terms, but when reading their satire, we cannot help feeling that, as Josephus actually observes, these things must have made a deep impression upon the heathen world. And now, who kindled the Sabbath lamp and trimmed the festal table, or invested the home with an air of purity and sanctity that put all the shrines of heathendom into the shade? Of course, the Jewish woman. But who empowered her to do so?

Follow me into an obscure part of Jewish history, the moulding of Judaism after the exile by the three factions: The Sadducees, the Essenes and the

Pharisees. The Sadducees, the priestly sons of Zaddok and his followers, forming the aristocracy of blood, bound to observe the written Law of Moses before their lapse into Epicurean vice, had the maintenance of the temple and priesthood as their only object in view. Why should they accord to woman privileges she had not enjoyed before? Why should they impart to private households a sanctity which thus far only the house of God claimed? They surely did not introduce the kindling of the Sabbath lights. On the contrary. We know of the Samaritans and Karaites, who as a rule followed in the footsteps of the Sadducees, that they considered it a violation of the Sabbath to have a light burn on the Sabbath Eve. Nothing that renders the Sabbath a day of cheer for man and wife and fosters the spirit of domesticity, did they consider as permissible. This was according to many indications also the view of the Sadducees. Especially were the Levitical laws of purity rigid and inexorable regarding woman's approach to the temple precincts and her participation in the sacred meals. Poor woman! Martyr of her maternal vocation, she was, after she had given birth to a child, barred out of the sanctuary for weeks; and then she had to offer sacrifices not of thanksgiving, but of purification. In this direction, then, the spiritual elevation of woman did not lie.

Still less regard did the Hasidim or the older school of the Pharisees, represented afterwards by the saintly Essenes, pay to woman. Banded together as brotherhoods for common meals and common devotion, with the view of attaining the same

holiness and purity as the priests, they invested the Sabbath with new sanctity, but were still more rigorous than the rest in their intercourse with woman, lest her very touch, or breath, might defile them and unfit them to hold communion with the holy spirit. While some went in their asceticism so far as to shun the married state altogether, when advanced in years, the Hasidean code of ethics, aiming at the highest ideal of purity, was—to judge from the few rules and historical facts preserved to us—so austere as to make the domestic life of woman almost unbearable. At any rate, woman and home did not profit by the influence of Essenism.

The scribes, then, who enjoined upon every Jewish household the duty of having the light kindled on Sabbath Eve and the Sabbath rendered a day of domestic joy, belonged to those Pharisean schools who felt and recognized the elevating, cheering and sanctifying influence of *woman* and the *home*. And we are in the position to fix the time when that influence became a power to modify the law and render the dignity of woman and the comfort of home, the ruling principle of Rabbinical practice. Simeon ben Shatah, the brother of Queen Salome Alexandra, the first of the Pharisean leaders who obtained a decisive victory for his party in the Sanhedrin, was the one who introduced legislative measures to secure to the wife her right of dowry, and by the form of a written contract—the *Kethuba*—in which the husband pledged himself to support and honor his wife, also to protect her against any whim and abuse. Henceforth we see the Jewish woman, more

and more, break the fetters of social bondage and the bars of religious seclusion, and make her power felt as a religious force, and as a source of practical wisdom. Gradually the old ban of Orientalism, which treated her like a chattel to be bought and sold, to be given away and taken in marriage by man without her own will and consent, is removed. Henceforth "she can no longer be married without her consent" according to the Rabbinical law, and under circumstances she may demand a divorce from her husband. Moreover, she should not be married without love, or without assurance being given that she be loved and worthy of her husband's esteem. "He who weds a wife without having seen her before, or marries one unbecoming his station, commits a five-fold sin," says the great master Akiba.

But it was owing far more to her own spontaneity and her self-emancipation than to concessions made by the doctors of the law, that she obtained her full recognition. The law still puts her on a par with the slave and the immature youth, considers her testimony before the court invalid, and excludes her from membership in the Congregation and from all the privileges of religious communion. She does not even count at the grace after meal, where three persons unite for solemn thanksgiving. Here the ancient view of priest and presbyter still prevail. Nay, more. Jose ben Johanan, in the Early Sayings of the Fathers, teaches: "Do not talk much with woman." How strict this Essene rule was, may be incidentally learned from the story of the Samaritan

woman, according to which the people were surprised to see Jesus talking with a woman. Notice with what disregard of her higher qualities of mind and soul Philo and Josephus still speak of woman. The men are to "thank God that He did not make them a woman," as the ancient ritual has it in a formula prescribed by R. Meir, and apparently already familiar to St. Paul—following the example of Plato and other Greek sages, if not the more ancient Persian sages who likewise thanked God every day "that He did not make them a Barbarian, a slave and a woman." Indeed, the law exempts woman, in view of her physical disabilities, from observing those commandments that are given for stated times; and the orthodox Jew who still recites that benediction refers to this fact in justification of the same. But see with what zeal, nevertheless, woman espoused her faith and endeavored, of her own accord, to perform any religious duty she could. She traveled, during the time of the Temple, for miles to offer her prayers on the holy spot, and all through the Talmudic and the medieval ages she was eager to study the Law and acquire proficiency therein, so as to be able to teach and to enter into learned disputes with the rabbis, or with heathen and Christian sages. How powerfully must she have impressed the rabbis of old, when, in commenting upon the scriptural verse: God "built the rib of Adam into woman" they say: "God endowed her with deeper wisdom and intuition", and that He created Eve as the highest type of beauty and plaited her hair, adorning her like a bride to render her attractive

to Adam. Indeed, those stern rabbis felt, and often made it a principle of law, notwithstanding all Levitical or Sabbatical statutes to the contrary, that woman should be a source of joy in the house, and no matter how plain the home, she should spread an air of contentment and happiness about her. "The daughters of Israel are all beautiful, unless poverty disfigures them," says R. Jishmael, Akiba's companion. Israel Zangwill's Ghetto women do not represent the true type of Jewesses.

Christian writers often tell us that Christianity emancipated woman. This claim is false. What are the Marthas and Magdalenes of the New Testament, compared with Beruria, the clever and pious wife of Rabbi Meir, or with Rachel, the wife of R. Akiba whose romantic love for her father's shepherd casts a glow of human pathos around the life of Judaism's great hero and martyr? The Church produced fine types of Sisters of Mercy, but what has Christian literature to compare with the ideal picture of a wife presented by the rabbis in Sarah? "Three signs of God's favor"—the Midrash tells us—"were manifested in the house of Abraham, as long as Sarah was alive: The first one was that, as over the tabernacle in the wilderness, so hovered over the tent of Sarah a pillar of cloud radiating with the majesty of God to make happiness and contentment reign therein. Secondly, God's blessing rested in a signal manner upon the bread she baked, so that, the more they handed of it to the poor and homeless who entered the hospitable house open on all sides to welcome them, the more there was to satisfy all. And

thirdly, the lamp which illumined her tent, burned in undiminished lustre from Sabbath Eve to Sabbath Eve, as if some angelic hand had trimmed and filled it with sacred oil, to spread light and cheer throughout the household and hallow it. And when Sarah died, these tokens of God's grace ceased; but no sooner did Rebecca enter the house as Isaac's betrothed, than the home was again crowned with its pristine glory." Now whatever imagination may have done for this beautiful picture of the true wife, actual experience must have prompted it. The Jewess of the Talmudical age must have proved a model wife as guardian of home, as prompter of religious sentiment *par excellence*, and as the minister of charity in the best sense of the word. Indeed, in all three qualities did the Jewish woman at all times excel, and well could a rabbi of the third century, R. Eleazar ben Pedath, say: "He who is without a wife is without joy, without happiness, without blessing, without peace." Surely it was out of his own experience that Akiba spoke when saying: "Rich is he who has a wife beautiful in her actions." The Talmud is replete with instances of great men of learning who received their inspiration for their devotion to the Law from their self-sacrificing wives. Well could, therefore, the Midrash portray to us the Hebrew wives in Egypt as steeling the men with faith and hope, when their spirits drooped under the Pharaonic oppression. How significant it is to learn that, when God told Moses to speak to the children of Israel, preparing them for their great mission as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, he was first

to address the *women* as the true representatives of "the house of Israel," in order to win them for their sacred task as wives and mothers.

But not only religious zeal, domestic affection and tender humanity do we find displayed by the Jewess of the Talmudical time. That broadness of mind and love of culture in which the woman of today excels, was also fostered by her. The women of the house of Hillel, the daughter of R. Abbahu and others were conversant in Greek, and thus enabled to hold discussions with pagan and Christian philosophers. What obstacles they had to overcome when coming across a rabbi of the old school, may be learned from one striking instance. Ima Shalom, the sister of Rabban Gamaliel, possessed culture and wit in a high degree. Once hearing a scoffer say to her father: "Your God is a thief, he stole a rib from Adam while he was asleep," she exclaimed: "Send for a sheriff!" "What has happened? asked the scoffer. "Thieves," she continued, "have broken into my house, and stolen a silver pitcher, and put a golden one in its place." "And these you call thieves?" "Yet," she answered, "dost thou call God a thief, who stole a rib from Adam and placed fair Eve in its stead!" Now, this high-minded woman was married to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, a fanatical adherent of the Shammaite principle of austerity in the Law. In vain she endeavored to infuse liberal ideas into him; he remained harsh and treated her with little regard. He applied the law in all its rigor, and did not care for the spirit of love and home comfort. He was in principle an Essene, an ascetic, and it is

he who made two statements often quoted as if expressive of Talmudical narrowness. The one is: "Woman's wisdom only turns on the spinning wheel." The other, "To let a daughter study the Law is to let her spend her time on folly."

How strange, then, to find our Eliezer, and likewise the old Shammaite school, condemn *divorce*, unless the wife has given cause by immoral conduct. "The altar of God sheds tears over the dismissal of the wife of one's youth," Eliezer says with reference to Malachi's words: "The Lord hates divorce"; whereas R. Akiba, in common with the whole school of Hillel would allow divorce to take place in every case of estrangement of sentiment and discord. We are in this respect far more inclined to indorse as the higher ethical view the maxim expressed in the New Testament, "What God has joined together, man shall not put asunder." We must, however, bear in mind that, if Judaism has followed the leading of Akiba and the Hillelite school, this is not because it entertains a lower opinion of woman than does the Essene school and the Church which emanated from the same, but because it insists that marriage and home life should be built on the deepest and truest sentiments of love, on lasting relations of mutual devotion and esteem. Of course, we may differ in regard to this, and claim indissoluble sacredness for the marriage tie. In that respect the progress of Jewish legislation shows a decided tendency to restrict the husband's power of divorcing his wife. Especially when the Jews came under the influence of Occidental—not Christian so much as German

civilization—was woman's claim as man's equal recognized by the Rabbinical authorities. But already the ancient rabbis felt that love may overcome the harsh letter of the law. You are probably familiar with the story of the couple who, after having lived together for years and finding their marriage not blessed with children, were ready in compliance with the law to be divorced. Having agreed that, before parting, the wife should take the choicest treasure of the house with her, she waited until her husband had fallen asleep, and then she carried him into her father's house, where they were re-united. Whereupon Simeon ben Johai, the saint, invoked God's blessing upon them, and they became happy parents. You can observe how far "Reb Shemuel" in the "Children of the Ghetto" is from the *true spirit* of the Law.

Nothing, in fact, characterizes Judaism better than the law which insists that its highest representative before God, the high-priest, must have a wife, or else he cannot fill his sacred office on the great Day of Atonement. Only he whose heart is permeated by the sentiment of love for wife and home was expected, according to the Talmud, to offer up the prayers of the Community to the universal Father in heaven, and be heard. The Christian Church takes marriage to be only a concession to the flesh, and therefore insists that her highest dignitary, the pope, should, like its founder or central figure, be unfamiliar with those deepest of all human feelings, the relations that bind man to his home, and have no wife. The Jewish religion centers in the home whose priestess, whether as wife and

mother or as educator and fashioner of the soul, is woman.

Need I dwell at length on what the Jewess was during the dark middle ages, when minstrels sang of love, but sinned against the home; and when priests and monks gloried in their abstinence vow and revelled in illicit passion; when barbarity and ignorance prevailed all over Christendom? While the husband and son had to wage the hard battle of existence far away from home throughout all the days of the week, facing the sneers of the mob, the Jewish wife kept the lamp of faith, the flame of religious education, the Sabbath light of domestic joy and purity, bright upon the altar of heart and home. The Jewish house-father knew why, on coming home on the Sabbath Eve, he recited the Song of the Virtuous Woman, ever anew. The preservation of Jewish life and sentiment was all the work of the Jewish woman. Nahida Remy, in her book on the Jewish Woman, names only a few of the great representatives of her sex who typified love of learning and zeal for the Law during the centuries of persecution. The fact is that everywhere the women exhorted their husbands to persevere in their loyalty to the ancestral faith; they were always the first to undergo martyrdom for the glorification of God's name and inspire the rest by their example. They attended to the affairs of both the household and the business in order to enable their husbands to spend their lives in the sacred work of studying the Law, and as a rule they did works of charity in a far more kindly and gentle manner than the men.

We hardly realize what a fund of poetry, of wisdom and wit she contributed to medieval Judaism; how she lent the Sabbath and the festival seasons, the whole life of the Jew, its charms and its rhythm; and how her artistic talent provided also for the elevation and beautification of the divine service.

But we also see the Jewess everywhere keeping abreast of the time; she shows greater familiarity than the men with the language, the literature, the fables, the folklore and the wise sayings of the surrounding world. She read not only devotional books, but also ethical works and legends written in the vernacular and introduced the elements of poetry and wit into the monotonous and dreary home life. No wonder, if occasionally warm friendship sprang up between Jewesses and Christian women of high rank in Spain and Italy, and it is not surprising to read that fear was entertained by the priests, lest these Christian women might be won over to Judaism by such friendly intercourse.

How singular, indeed, that, while a large number of prominent Jews turned renegades and traitors to their religion, there are, during the Middle Ages but rare instances found, of cultured Jewesses who yielded to powerful influences and broke away from the faith of their fathers. As Professor Lazarus says, "The *Jewess* was the guardian-angel of the Jewish race—the main preserver of Judaism."

It is only since the beginning of the new era that a change has come over the Jewish woman. The greater refinement and culture of Christian society round about her, and the lack of true sentiment and

soul-life in the mere formal observance of the ancient rites, seem to have caused a break in her religious consciousness, in her soul's unity with God. Under the leadership of the Mendelssohnian circles, where enlightenment meant apostacy, the modern Jewess became the pioneer of the social and intellectual emancipation of woman, and she has everywhere since then earned laurels in the field of literature, art, education and philanthropy. As the standard bearer of religion only has she been slow to come forward. At the ark of faith she has not yet taken the place assigned to her as a Deborah, Hannah or Hulda.

Of course, we glory in the four women our century produced, each of whom shed bright lustre upon her age and sex. Grace Aguilar, the gifted author who kindled love for the Jewish faith in thousands of young Israelites; and Emma Lazarus, the poetess, who so proudly unfurled the banner of the Jew in battle against the anti-Semite; Judith Montefiore, the soul and inspiration of her illustrious husband, the Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore; and not the least of these is Clara de Hirsch, the queen of all philanthropists, whose name will be mentioned with blessings innumerable by many generations to come. But I do not want to speak of individuals. What is Judaism to the Jewess in general to-day, I ask? The Jewess who has left the views and the customs of the Ghetto behind her and breathes the fresh, invigorating air of modern culture and refinement, of broad humanity with all its aims and ideals.

When the Reform movement, child of the period of German enlightenment, was started in the second half of the last century, the sympathy and support of the Jewess were enlisted and her religious emancipation proclaimed with the implicit hope and confidence that she would inaugurate a new era in Judaism, that she would kindle the smouldering fires of religion anew in the heart and the home. All innovations in Synagog and school were made with the view of securing perfect equality between woman and man before God, and the emotional powers rather than the intellectual were evoked to win men and women alike by the spirit, rather than by insistence on the letter of the law. And behold, woman has responded to the call; she has helped in filling our pews and lending greater solemnity and dignity to our service, and new enthusiasm and love to our work of education. Conservative and liberal both build their hope on woman to-day.

Dare we give expression to disappointment, because the fruitage is slow to ripen, the anticipated change has not come about?

The Council of Jewish Women, offspring of the World's Parliament of Women, with its two fields of labor, study of the Bible and its philanthropic circle, has also awakened new expectations in many of us, and given rise to new visions and new energies in the cause of Judaism. But as yet the great revival of the Synagog, so eagerly looked for, has not come, nor has the religious ardor anywhere perceptibly increased. Laudable efforts in starting Mission schools in the poorer districts have been made; individuals have been reclaimed to the Jewish fold

by the movement; still, the masses have not been touched, the Jewish soul in its depth has not been stirred. Not a single seer has come forth with a prophetic call; not a single singer has voiced the message of the hour. And yet we are in great need of poetry and song. We crave for the word of inspiration from among the people, since the pulpit has lost so much of its power, and the rabbi, in this critical age, is well-nigh bereft of his authority.

The great mistake which we have been making all along is that in the attempt at reforming the Synagog, we overlooked the greater need of a reconsecrated home life. Israel's first sanctuary was not the tabernacle, but the house. The fire on the altar of home must be rekindled; the Sabbath lamp must be relit; the music of prayer and praise to God must be heard again in our domestic circle. The study of the Biblical and Jewish literature and the science of philanthropy are noble objects and do much good in their way, but they are the concern only of the few. We require more concentrated efforts on behalf of religious education and elevation. We need the hearty co-operation of the pew and the pulpit, the full harmonious blending of heart and head, of congregation and of woman's wise leadership and council. Woman's persuasive power—says the Midrash—drove man out of Paradise; woman's light and leading must bring him back.

At no previous time were the privileges and opportunities, and therewith also the duties and responsibilities of woman as great as they are to-day. It is in woman's power to rescue our social life from the mire of sensuality, which threatens to engulf it.

and lift it to higher aims and standards, so as to make the Jewish star of household virtue shine again in its pristine splendor. Let every mother, every daughter of Israel again make Judaism the glory and central object of her life, and find her pride in the glorification of the Jewish faith, in the stainless purity and rectitude of every member of her house, in the love and zeal for Jewish living and thinking fostered therein. Then we will hear less of the Jewish Question, less of prejudice and persecution, less of the world's hatred and of life's woe; because each one will then possess a treasure worth living, worth dying and worth suffering for. Idealism is what made the Jewess the preserver of her race. Idealism is what we so sorely need to-day.

Life's stern battle for independence and power strains all the nerves of man, absorbing his interest and energy to render him a selfish utilitarian, a materialist in this materialistic age. Woman, with a soul truer to nature and more responsive to the tender appeals of religious duty, to the softer chords of piety, is called upon to hold aloft the banner of idealism, and to kindle the lamp of fidelity and faith in the home. May we not confidently look for the time when the Jewess of to-day, when the self-respecting and loyal American Jewess with her greater gifts of intellect and her higher culture of heart, will make a determined effort to turn her home life, her social life, the life of all entrusted to her care, God-ward instead of worldward, and help in the great work of regeneration of Israel, to bring piety and peace back to our homes, the lost Paradise back to man? May God speed the day! Amen.

24.

THE ORIGIN AND FUNCTION OF CEREMONIES IN JUDAISM.*

THE significance of ceremony in the religious life of the Jew forms one of the main points at issue between Orthodoxy and Reform. To Rabbinical Judaism the Sinaitic Law, written or oral, is immutable, each of the 613 commandments being regarded as fundamental, and the distinction made between moral laws, dictated by reason, and ritual laws, which rather baffle reason and common sense, did not imply that the former are of greater importance. While dividing the Mosaic laws into universally human or social and specifically Jewish or religious precepts, Maimonides expressly assigns to the latter a higher rank, in view of their ulterior spiritual aims and purposes. Moses Mendelssohn was, therefore, in perfect accord with tradition when, rationalist as he was, he declared the ceremonial laws to be the essential portion of the Mosaic legislation, whereas the ethical laws of the Pentateuch, being dictates of reason and common-sense, are the universal property of mankind. "Instead of imposed dogmatic beliefs which shackle the human intellect, those ceremonies should form a species of picture-

*Paper read before the Central Rabbinical Conference, in 1907, and adapted for the general reader by the omission of archeological and bibliographical detail.

language to awaken and foster certain thoughts in the minds of all, and appeal to the heart of each so as to render them guardians of pure theism." This view, presented by Mendelssohn in his Jerusalem, prevailed, and all stress was laid upon the ceremonial law as being peculiarly Jewish and bound up with the memories and hopes of the Jewish people. It is, however, a great inconsistency on the one hand to denounce submission to an imposed creed in the name of liberty of conscience, and on the other hand to demand blind submission to imposed forms of practice which no longer have any meaning for us. It is perfectly logical for him who believes in a supernatural revelation to maintain that, no matter whether they appeal to our understanding or not, the ritual laws demand obedience as "the decrees of the great Ruler of Life concerning which scrutiny is not permissible." On the part of those, however, who deny the authenticity of the Pentateuch, blind adherence to usages that have no justification in themselves is slavish practice without conviction, unworthy of thinking men. Reform, then, hinges on the question whether Judaism is a system of ceremonial observance as binding upon the Jew as is the system of dogmatic belief upon the Christian, or whether Judaism is a system of religious and ethical truths, the ceremonies being only the means to higher ends, not ends in themselves. But in how far these are to be regarded as essentially Jewish and therefore to be unalterably maintained, and in how far they present only adaptations from older non-Jewish life and, accordingly, permit of

modifications, alterations and radical changes, is a question concerning which opinions still widely differ. In order to reach positive conclusions, a historic review of the ceremonies in their various stages of growth is required, and the principles underlying their development in the different phases of religious life must be investigated and established.

When speaking of ceremony, we must dismiss the notion we moderns have that it is a mere conventional form without intrinsic value and meaning. To go back to the Latin, *caerimonia* signifies reverence and awe, like the word *religio* with which it is frequently coupled, while the plural *caerimoniae* denotes religious rites. For the pagan mind in general the ceremonies constitute religion, which is viewed simply as a mode of worship void of ethical purposes. In the course of time, however, the original object of these ceremonies is forgotten, and they become empty forms, until upon a higher stage they are invested with new meaning and made to convey higher thoughts. There is, consequently, a singular affinity noticeable between the ceremonies of various people and classes, since as a rule, they have a common origin in primitive life. Ceremonies are never the creations of individuals; they grow and change like languages. They are, as Edward B. Tylor calls them, "the gesture-language of theology." The people that crave for rain, for instance, would in solemn manner pour out water before the heavenly power to suggest what it should do for them, and henceforth water libation becomes part of the sacrificial ritual elsewhere. Each ceremony may thus

be traced to its origin in primitive time. When the Occidental lifts his hat before a superior to-day, he is unaware of the far older form of showing submissive self-surrender by stripping oneself of all armaments and equipments, which, of course, included the head-gear. This corresponds with the Oriental custom of taking off the shoes. On the other hand, it is regarded as disrespectful in the East to receive, or be seen by strangers, bareheaded, and it stands to reason that it is considered by Orientals still more derogatory to the honor of God to stand bareheaded before Him in prayer or in sight of the sanctuary. You observe, at once the pivotal question at issue: Are we as Jews in Occidental life to be Orientals in the house of God, or are we Occidentals in every respect?

The Mosaic ceremonial system, impressive as it is with the authority of divine legislation and with the grandeur of a great world-wide historic power, speaks to us, nevertheless, in a religious language not our own. We have to retranslate it into our own mode of thinking and feeling. It is based upon sacrifice, against which our religious consciousness revolts. It rests upon notions of priestly holiness and purity which we reject. It confines the worship of the Most High to the priesthood and the sanctuary, and fails to bring God nigh to the people, and home to each heaven-aspiring soul. Mosaism, with its temple cult, is to us—and this is the essential difference between Reform and Orthodox Judaism—only the preparatory stage to Rabbinism with its Synagogal life, and to Modern Judaism with its many-centered religious life. Those who call us Karaites or Mosaites

know neither what Karaism was, nor what Reform Judaism stands for. We believe in the ever-working laws of historic evolution, and see in assimilation a force ever at work in Judaism's progress. The entire *sacrificial* cult of the Pentateuch is the result of a powerful assimilation. Careful scientific investigations comparing the Babylonian, the Phenician and the old Arabic sacrificial system, including even the terminology, with that of the Mosaic Code, have established the fact beyond a cavil of doubt that the divine lawgiver, or lawgivers, simply adopted the rules and customs of priestly practice prevalent for ages, while at the same time eliminating such elements as were connected with idolatry, witchcraft and the abominable orgies of the Astarte and Baal cult, and changing form and character here and there to give the whole service a higher and more spiritual meaning and purpose. The fundamental principle that all the sacrificial and priestly practices should, by various degrees of purity and sanctity, lead up to and culminate in the divine ideal of Holiness, in a Holy God whose sacredness is to eradiate from the sanctuary and impart itself to the people over the land, at once lent the system a peculiar and lofty character; but the system itself as a religious machinery was borrowed from its environments. The central idea which pervades the entire sacrificial service is the same that underlies the Semitic, if not primitive religion in general, and that is, that only *blood* as the vital power of man and beast *unites* and *reunites* men and God. Only blood possesses the power of *atonement*. Only blood seals a covenant and recon-

ciles an angry deity. Only the signs of blood protect the houses, the men and the flocks against malign spirits. Read the personal observations made in Bible lands by Prof. Curtiss in his "Primitive Semitic Religion" and by Clay Trumbull as recorded in his "Blood Covenant" and "The Threshold Covenant," and you have the key to many religious ceremonies of ancient Israel. New light is there thrown upon the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of Exodus, which treat of the Passover lamb whose blood is sprinkled upon the doorsill and doorposts, and of the sacrifice of the firstborn of the flock and the herd, together with the signs upon the arm and the forehead. We learn of the shepherds of Arabia and Palestine offering each spring at the increase of their flocks and herds some of the firstborn as a sacrifice called *Fedu*—the same as *Pidion*, "Redemption,"—into the blood of which they dip the hand to put the sign of "a hand" or of the letter Tau, which had originally the form of a cross, upon the doorsill and upon the forehead of men, and sprinkle some upon the flock and the herd to avert ill-luck, or to insure the divine blessing. So is every new household, opened by a moving tribe, or by a newly married couple, consecrated by sacrificial blood warding off evil spirits that may beleaguer it.

Likewise is the life of a child in cases of sickness or distress, dedicated to the local saint, bought off by the sacrifice of a lamb or goat, and in case of poverty also by a rooster or hen. We thus find the closest similarity between the practices mentioned in the Bible and those still in use in the Bible lands. Also in regard to the festivities of the ingathering and

the firstlings of the yearly produce. As Maimonides, in the third book of his Moreh, has suggested with fine divinatory powers, it was the method of a wise pedagogy which either made use of pagan rites to train the people of Israel for higher religious views and habits, or so transformed the ancient practices as to guard the people against lapsing into heathen vice and cruelty.

We must bear in mind that antiquity knew of no other form of worship than sacrifice. However bitterly the great prophets in Israel condemned the heathen mode of bribing deity by the blood and the oil poured upon the altar, while Israel's God demanded righteous conduct, they could not abrogate the sacrificial cult. Nor did they intend doing so. They did not accord to prayer and song a higher place in the service. Even the great seer of the Exile, when giving utterance to the glorious vision of the time when the house of God would become a house of prayer for all the nations, still beholds the pillars of smoke rising from an altar decked with holocausts and other blood offerings. And so does "the incense of sacrifice offered to God from the rising of the sun until its setting" betoken to the last of the Prophets the universality of religion. Only the Hasidean Psalms XI and L echo forth the clear note of dissent, ushering in a new era of religious life during the Exile, as we shall see. In the Mosaic system the priestly ritual, dominant in all sanctuaries, is the only legitimate one. Prayer and confession of sin are admitted as occasional outpourings of the individual, yet only at the outer parts of the sanctuary.

Even the inspiring song and music of Levitical choirs find no place, or mention, alongside of the primitive horn (Shofar) and trumpet.

In all likelihood this simplicity is intentional. It was to form a striking contrast to the seductive orgies of the Canaanite. This would also account for the strange lack of ceremonial prescribed for the different holy days. Only the old shepherd festival of spring, Pesah, transformed into a memorial feast of the Exodus, has a more elaborate ritual. The three agricultural festivals still appear in a rather shadowy form, except in so far as the number of sacrifices is concerned. There are several indications in Scriptural passages that the Sukkoth festivities of the water libation held in the second temple originated in ancient times; but the priestly legislation had no interest in a public ceremonial outside of the sanctuary.

In the Atonement Day ceremonial we have a peculiar combination of a primitive Semitic and a purely monotheistic rite of expiation. The scapegoat sent out to Azazel, the goat-like demon of the wilderness, belongs to the same category as the bird sent out to carry the disease of the leper into the wilderness, and has many analogies in ancient Semitic usages. This archaic rite meant for the inhabitants of Jerusalem originally the removal of physical evil for the new solar year. The priesthood, on the other hand, expatiated on the rites of expiation for the sanctuary, the effects of which only indirectly affected the people for whom the day was made a fast day. The whole ritual has an exclusively hierarchical character, which was changed only at the hands of

the Pharisees in their combat with Sadduceeism. These only gave it the character of a grand symbolic act of purification and divine atonement.

The only day which stands out as a genuine Jewish institution without parallel in paganism is the *Sabbath.* It is emphatically declared to be the sign of the covenant between God and Israel. Unlike the Babylonian Sabbath, which figures as a day of austerity and gloom for the royal representative of the nation, the Mosaic Sabbath is a day of rest and recreation for the whole nation, including the slave, the stranger and the beast. It is a testimonial to God as the Creator of the Universe as well as the Liberator of man. Still, a ceremonial of a positive kind is prescribed only for the priest who, besides the additional sacrifice, places the new shew-bread upon the golden table each Sabbath day, while taking home the old.

As the great Memorial day of the deliverance from Egypt, the Passover feast also occupies a central position in the Mosaic number of holy days. Many ceremonies cluster around it to become reminders of important religious and ethical laws, the unleavened bread of primitive time having been rendered symbolic of the hastened exodus of Israel from the land of bondage.

There remain for discussion, then, those ceremonies particularly enjoined as signs for the body. The most important of these is the sign of the Abrahamitic covenant. Here, too, the pedagogical tendency of the Mosaic law becomes evident, as soon as we compare the rite prescribed in Genesis with the

one in use among all the other tribes in Arabia, Africa and Australia, and find traces of the older primitive form also in ancient Biblical time. It is the consecration of manhood at the approach of puberty and before marriage that is intended by the practice in primitive life, and the painful ordeal becomes a test for the youth, as in similar savage customs. Obviously, in assigning the tenderest age of infancy as the time for the performance of the rite, when the pain, or consciousness of pain, is minimized, whereas Ishmael, the father of the Beduin tribe, is circumcised at thirteen years of age, the act is elevated to the dignity of a solemn initiation of the child into the Abrahamitic household. There is no doubt, however, that the idea of the Blood-Covenant prevailed also in relation to this rite, as may be learned from its relation to the Passover feast. And this leads us to the "sign" on the hand and between the eyes mentioned in this connection in Exodus xiii, 9 and 16. Rabbinical tradition refers this to the Phylacteries introduced in post-Biblical time. But Samaritan practice to this very day helps to elucidate the passage. The blood of the Passover-lamb slaughtered on Mount Gerizim is being put on the arm and the forehead of the children. Out of such custom, which has talismanic character, the Tefillin or Phylacteries developed, just as the *Mezuzzah* grew out of the other talismanic practice of bedaubing the doors with blood in the shape of a hand and the like. The Deuteronomic law-giver suggests by way of symbolism "the binding of the words of the Law on arm and forehead and the inscription of

the same on the doorposts," a practice met with among Moslems to-day and among Christians of old; and this became a fixed ceremonial law, although the talismanic character of both the Tefillin and Mezuzzah is occasionally alluded to in the Targum and the Talmud. The *Zizith*, too, which in Deuteronomy is merely enjoined as a lesson of public decorum, are prescribed in the Holiness Code as a ceremonial practice of a religious nature, though the talismanic character of the purple blue thread upon the fringes is generally assumed by modern commentators and seemingly confirmed by Talmudic utterances.

A real consecration of the entire people of Israel as God's holy priest-nation is expressed in the dietary laws, the priestly origin and character of which cannot be doubted by the student of comparative religion. Whether R. Smith's theory of the totemitic significance of the unclean, or tabooed, animals, be accepted or not, the fact that the laws of the Hindoos, of the Persians, the Babylonians and the Egyptians forbade the same classes of animals to the priesthood, and that the Mosaic Code itself takes it for granted that the distinction between the clean and the unclean animals dates back to the oldest, the Noahidic times, proves that the underlying principle is not a social or hygienic, but a specifically religious one. It is the great legislative attempt to carry into practical effect the prophetical idea expressed at the Sinaitic Revelation: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." It was, however, on a higher stage, in a more congenial religious atmosphere, that this great plan could be brought nearer

to its realization, and this was the period of Hasidean or Pharisaic and Rabbinical Judaism.

The difference in the religious life between pre-Exilic and post-Exilic Israel is so marked and so amazingly great, that the rabbis could account for it only by the legend that the founders of the Synagogue, "the Men of the great Asembly," had seized the *Yezer ha Ra* by magic and exterminated him from the earth, so as to put an end to the idolatrous propensities of the people. The fact is that with the rise of Persia a new spirit entered the world and brought about a great change, especially among the Jewish exiles. The higher conception of Deity which lent to life in general a moral purpose, though based on dualism, demanded of the Parsee a purer form of worship. The rising and setting sun, the waning and waxing moon, the various phenomena of nature presenting the combat of light with darkness, and of life with death, were greeted with invocations and prayers rather than with bloody sacrifice. The sensual worship of the lascivious Babylonian deities made way for an adoration of the god of light. Again it is the principle of assimilation which is at work in the shaping of the Jewish religion. Alongside of the temple with its sacrificial cult attended to by the Sadducean hierarchy, the Synagog arises as a new center of religious life created by "the humble" or "pious ones," the saints of the people, impregnated with the prophetic truths and echoing forth their lofty aspirations in the psalms, and then in a liturgy shaped after Parsee models. An intense religious enthusiasm which finds its resonance in the people's

heart, is awakened by these Hasidim of the type of Daniel, and expresses itself in ceremonies of a far higher order than is the priestly ritual. The origin of the recital of the Shema, with the preceding benediction praising the Creator for the light of day and Israel's Only One for the light of the Torah, has been traced to Parsee influence. It was not *imitation*, but *assimilation* that prompted all the great improvements upon the old priestly cult. Yes, the founders of the Synagog were reformers in adopting the Parsee ceremony of greeting the orb of light at its rise every morning and every evening at its setting; but whereas the worshippers of Ormuzd with their magic formula hailed the sun as deity, the Hasidim invoked God as the Creator of Light and Darkness, expressly accentuating the monotheistic doctrine in contradiction to the dualism of Persia. In connection with this, a recognition of God's sovereignty, was the ceremony of putting on the *Tefillin* and of wrapping the head into the *Zizith* (or *Tallith*) made a regular part of the morning prayer, for which also the Parsee custom offers an analogy. In fact, most of the ceremonies and benedictions are adaptations from Parseeism.

The leading idea of the epoch ushered in by the Persian dominion was the assertion of the right of the individual in the religious life of the nation. And of this the Synagog became the powerful exponent, revolutionizing religion by instituting, in place of the sacrificial priestly pomp, a simple service fervent with true devotion and rich in instruction, to appeal to all hearts. God stepped, as it were, out of the darkness of the Holy of Holies, to which only the elect of

the priesthood had access once a year, into the full daylight of reason and knowledge, to become in reality the God and Father of all. The Torah in the hand of the scribe, the teacher and preacher, was to become the property of all; and around the ark containing it and the desk from which it was read and expounded to the congregation, sprang up ceremonies full of meaning and impressiveness. The Torah lent to the Sabbath and holy days a significance they could not have had in ancient Israel; it gave to each season of the circling years a new charm and rhythm. Out of the heart of the religious community blossomed forth the ideas which transformed the three agricultural feasts and the feast of the temple expiation on the tenth of Tishri with its herald, the day of the Shofar blowing, into the great awakeners of religious thought and sentiment, and around each there began to cluster specific ceremonies of soul-stirring beauty and grandeur.

But here, too, we must not lose sight of the historic law of evolution. It is always the few elect who usher in new ideas. The Pharisean brotherhoods, in reclaiming for their assemblies the sanctity of the priesthood guaranteed to Israel at Sinai, gave a new solemnity to their Sabbath and holy day meals by the *Kiddush* and *Habdalah* ceremony, made the Passover night resonant with the joyous strains of the Haggadah, transformed the farmer's feast of the firstlings into a memorial day of Sinai, and created the great autumnal season of religious revival for the Jew. The daily meals were also lifted out of the commonplace and invested with

priestly holiness by these brotherhoods. Seated around a common table, they began and finished with benedictions and other ceremonies, in imitation of temple practice and that of other religious fraternities. In like manner, social events, such as weddings and funerals, or the initiation of youths into the study and practice of the Torah, the Bar Mizwah celebration, were made specific religious solemnities. Gradually a new factor of religious life enters and opens a new sphere for ceremonial observance. Woman as builder and guardian of the home is more and more recognized, and the rigor of the Mosaic purity laws, as well as the austerity of the Hasidean saint, gives way to the dictates of common sense. Henceforth the Jewish home is emblazoned and enriched with new ceremonies which accord to woman a prominent place in religious life. The kindling of the Sabbath lamp and the baking of the Sabbath bread, and the like, invest domestic life with new means of sanctification. In the same measure as the Jew withdraws from the political arena to form an exclusively religious community in the midst of the nations, his life from the cradle to the grave becomes a round of ceremonial observances distinguishing it from his surroundings. Yet as the real purpose and origin of all these rites and ceremonies were forgotten, the impression obtains that separation, distinction of the Jew from the non-Jew, was the sole object, and non-Jewish habits, even of the most innocent kind, are condemned as included in the Mosaic prohibition of *Hukkat ha Goy*, which refers only to the lewd practices of the idolatrous nations.

But such is the power of assimilation working unconsciously in Judaism, that almost every age and country added customs and ceremonies of pagan origin and superstitious character. Such a one is the rite of *Kapparoth*, the waiving and slaughtering of a cock, respectively hen, for males and females, on the eve of Yom Kippur, a sort of vicarious sacrifice met with also among Mohammedans, and likewise the ransoming of the dangerously sick, "*Pidyon ha Nefesh*".

The rites connected with marriage, birth and death present a strange combination of ancient Oriental and Occidental practices. The wine and the benedictions at the wedding date from the time when the sacrificial meal cemented the matrimonial covenant, whereas the ring as a symbol is a medieval innovation. Few people are aware that the bridal veil, which lent the name to the Roman nuptials, is but a survival of the cutting-off of the bride's hair, a practice still adhered to in Russia among Jews and Gentiles. So has the Rabbinical prohibition to have weddings take place in holy seasons its parallel in Roman custom, while the forbidding of weddings during the Omer days corresponds to the Roman and English avoidance of May weddings.

The solemnizing of the *Berith Milah* is neither Biblical nor Talmudical, but was apparently adopted from the Mohammedans. Especially interesting is the adoption of the feast of Naming the Child from the Germans under the heathen name of *Holle Kreisch* for the daughter, since Oriental tradition had made no provision for this family event.

Especially large is the number of practices adopted by the Jew from his surroundings in the event of death. Superstition,—*deisidaemonia* "fear of the demons" as the Greeks call it—is the child of fear. Most funeral rites were originally means of pacifying the dead who claimed their part from the living. Out of the sacrifices to the dead, transformed later into sacrifices *for* the dead, developed all the rites and prayers that at a more advanced stage became sources of comfort for the living. The ancient fear died away, and piety stepped into its place to preserve the old customs in a new garb and in a new spirit. There is nothing that so appeals to the Jew with his innate love for the fathers who sleep in the dust, as does the *Kaddish* and the *Yahrzeit*. Yet both have their origin in fear, fear of the purgatory and fear lest the unlucky day again bring death. They have obtained a prominent place in Jewish life, though their origin and character are un-Jewish.

In thus reviewing the entire system of Jewish observances we find them to be indispensable forms of expressing the religious feelings prompted by the various events of life. As we advance in culture, enlightenment and refinement, these various ceremonies may appear to us as empty shells, void of meaning, but we must never forget that nothing grows on the tree or in the soil without the shielding leaf and husk. Abstract truth and ethical practice fail to satisfy the religious craving of man. He needs ceremonies that impress him with the nearness and the holiness of the divine. And while the Mosaic Code placed the sanctuary and the priesthood into

the foreground, often ignoring the life of the people, we see Pharisaic and Rabbinic Judaism creating new ceremonies or transforming the old, so as to impress the Jew on all occasions with his priestly sanctity. He rejoices in the multitude of observances which surround his life like so many guardian-angels. Unlike his Christian neighbor, who from fear of the Satanic powers of evil surrenders to blind dogma, he sees his path of life lined with ceremonies which secure to him the divine favor.

The question for us to-day, however, is: Can these ceremonies of traditional Judaism still occupy the same place in our life? True, they have accomplished much for the Jew of the past in offering a wondrous discipline, which drilled him to do soldier's duty in defending the ancestral inheritance and in shunning no sacrifice to uphold it against a world of bitterest enmity and intolerance. Still, they have long ceased to impress us with the idea of priestly holiness and have become "the work of men inculcated by rote." Rabbinical ceremonialism has become as unbearable to us as the sacrificial sacerdotalism was to the prophets of old. The dietary and purity laws, whether Mosaic or Rabbinical, are dead for most of us, and no power in the world can resuscitate them. And this is the case with many other ceremonial institutions deemed fundamental by the law-observing Orthodox. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, as our entire *Weltanschauung* changes, so must our religious views necessarily change. In order to have a positive religious value and significance, ceremonies must either directly

or symbolically express thoughts and feelings that appeal to us, while elevating, hallowing and enriching our lives. Romanticism, which only loves ancient practices because they are picturesque representations of a dead past, is not religion, which must above all be the voice of a living truth, of a living God.

As for modern Judaism the fact must be acknowledged that the same laws that have been at work both in the Mosaic and in the Rabbinic periods of Judaism are still at work in the modern epoch; only with the essential difference that in the former stages the work was done by unconscious forces of the Jewish genius, for which the religious terminology is revelation and inspiration, God working through His chosen organs and authorities, whereas in our age of reason the religious progress is achieved by us in response to the dictates of our own religious consciousness. The recognition of the fact that both Mosaism and Pharisaism have been borrowing and adopting forms of religious practice from their surroundings in the shaping and reshaping of the religious life of the Jewish people, entitles us to pursue the same method of the remodeling of the present Judaism in order to revitalize and quicken its forces. Of course, innovations and reforms at first militate against the justly venerated authority of the past, and it requires a successive period of tacit assent to legitimize them and render them integral parts of the whole system of religion.

Now there can be no question as to the need of ceremonial practices in our age. Doctrine alone, however lofty, does not stir the soul and bring it

in touch with the great Fountainhead of Holiness and Love. Religious practices do. They awaken and deepen, as Lazarus says in his "Jewish Ethics," the sense of duty in us. They develop our spiritual faculties, because they appeal to our emotional nature. They impress us with the holiness of life much more than abstract truth can. They bring all the lessons of religion home to us in striking, persuasive form. The skeptic who remains cold when he hears arguments, however convincing, is moved to tears when some ceremonial act brings back to him long-forgotten memories, roused by associations of thought and sentiment connected therewith. No religion can be without such memorial "signs", least of all Judaism with its wondrous history of achievement and of endurance. Ceremonies are the educators and monitors of the people; they speak to old and young, to sage and simple-minded alike the language of faith, of hope and of loyalty.

The question is, however, in how far do our inherited religious practices fulfill this aim and object? There is no dispute among the most radical that the Sabbath and festival days are still most potent ceremonial institutions, performing the function of educators for the Jewish community, the home and the individual. They revive the dormant soul of the Jew ever anew, giving rhythm, pathos and charm to the life of each and all. But, then, are the ceremonies connected with each, real signs and testimonies symbolic of the truths they are to convey? Do they speak an intelligible language to the young for whom they are, according to Scripture, chiefly

intended? Here is the place where Reform has to step in and render the old ceremonial attractive, suggestive and impressive for the new generation. We all realize to-day that the ceremonies for the home have not received sufficient attention. The importance of hallowing and enriching the Jewish home life has not been fully appreciated. Dr. Berkowitz has made a good beginning with his Sabbath Eve Kiddush. Thus should the beautiful parental blessing at each family reunion on Sabbath and holy day eve again be introduced, to render the whole more impressive. It must be placed to the credit of the Reformers that the ceremony of the kindling of the Hanukkah lights has been revived in homes, where the Christmas tree threatened to captivate the young hearts and lessen their pride in their ancestral faith. Yet much more ought to be done by us to awaken the sentiment of loyalty and love in the young, by the introduction of new appropriate forms where the old ones have lost their impressiveness.

At present we need means of strengthening the self-respect of the Jew, of arousing his Jewish consciousness. Especial emphasis must therefore be laid upon the ties that bind him to his past, which alone will fill his soul with pride in his great heritage. In religion especially, where reverence plays so prominent a role, the ancient institutions must be treated with regard and awe, and as long as any religious observance proves helpful, it should be retained. We can herein learn from nature, never to cast off the old before the new is strong enough to weather the storms. If the wholesome effect

made by ceremonies upon the parents is observed by the child, they will not fail to work by the mystery of sympathy upon the latter in the plastic time of youth. Upon the much neglected home of the Jew, then, the ceremonial system should be centered. Religion should stand as sponsor at the naming of the child, and should solemnize each important event in the life of the household, thus rendering the home a true sanctuary, and father and mother its priest and priestess, as of yore. Even the recital of the Shema each morning and evening might be transformed into a solemn domestic service, to leave its ennobling and hallowing impression upon each member of the household.

We must bear in mind that we are in a great transition period. The yoke-bearing age is behind us. Formerly the ceremonies were to be observed as divine commands; for us to-day they must have an intrinsic value in order to be of binding force. Religion must first of all voice the innermost craving of the human soul as a child of God. Ceremonies which assign to woman an inferior rank according to Oriental notions, are out of place with us. Reform Judaism recognizes woman as man's equal and sees in her deeper emotional nature, which is more responsive to the promptings of the spirit, the real inspiring influence for religious life in the household. Accordingly, all the ceremonies in the domestic life to-day should be Occidental rather than Oriental in form and character.

The calling up of the thirteen year old lad, the *Bar Mitzwah*, to read from the Torah, is a mere sur-

vival of the calling up of all the members of the congregation to the Torah reading. The original significance, which was to indicate thereby the admission of the lad into the membership of the congregation, has been forgotten, and consequently the usage to-day is meaningless. The moment the Oriental notion of the superiority of man over woman in religious life was abandoned, a form of consecration for the young of both sexes was instituted in its place, and the beautiful rite of confirmation was adopted. As a befitting conclusion of many years of religious instruction it exerts a potent influence upon the young Jews and Jewesses, while it has lent new attractiveness to the Shabuoth festival, which otherwise lacked a specific or characteristic ceremony in traditional Judaism.

Greater stress than in former days is laid to-day upon the recital of the Kaddish and similar tributes of affectionate regard for the dead. True, such emotional piety can never replace true, religious sentiment. Nevertheless there is a brighter side to it, of which account must be taken. The crude belief in resurrection of the dead, which has been the source of fear and superstitious practices, has made way for the belief in the immortality of the soul. And this has lent new solemnity to that part of the service called Commemoration of the Dead—a liturgy which, while emphasizing in classic form the inherited trait of Jewish reverence and piety, has invested the Yom Kippur with new lustre for the Jew of to-day.

But above all, the Jewish religion must be presented as a factor of life in humanity's work, in order

to win all hearts to-day. It must accentuate the universal, the human and the practical side of life. It must train man for the service of mankind. Are our ceremonials vocal of this prophetic truth? It is by no means sufficient to have symbols bringing home to us the glorious memories of the past. We must have such as hold before us the great hopes, promises and ideals of the future, together with practical lessons for the present. The feast of redemption must tell us of the redemption of an oppressed world and of the great universal plan of liberty, allotting its burdens and its tasks to each and all. So must the Maccabean feast of lights proclaim the ultimate triumph of truth and justice over falsehood, intolerance and wrongdoing everywhere. So will each festival, the Day of the Giving of the Law with its lesson concerning Ruth and the Proselyte, and Sukkoth with its peace offerings for the seventy nations of the world, lead us out of the narrowness of the national self to the broad outlook of cosmopolitan humanity with its practical aims. And as the great New Year's and Atonement Days preached since wellnigh two-thousand years the religion of manhood and of broad humanity, may they not become also powerful instrumentalities of uniting and reconciling all classes and races of men by practical modes of readjusting the inadequacies of social life suggested by symbols taken from the Yom Kippur Haphthara, and by the Jubilee idea connected with the Yom Kippur?

It has been said that in emphasizing our mission to preach pure ethical monotheism, we are fast losing

our Jewishness, which is maintained only through separatistic Jewish observances of the Oriental type. It seems to me that they labor under a great misapprehension who earnestly believe that the Occidental Jew in general will ever fashion his social life differently from that of the people amongst whom he lives. And if he were to do so, he would merely lessen the great opportunities offered him by this age of ours of rendering his religion "a light to the nations" and "a blessing to all families on earth." To us Judaism is an ever-progressive religion, and in a congenial atmosphere of freedom and moral greatness, it is bound to expand, and its symbolic rites will be commensurate in suggestiveness and intrinsic value. No fear, then, that the Jew may lose his identity when he aspires to the highest aims of life, buoyed up with the consciousness of his mission for the world. In order to impress the Jew with the greatness of his task and his responsibility as mankind's priest, we should have certain ceremonies. It is for this that new symbolic forms may have to be created expressive of the Jew's world-duty as God's chosen one, since the mere prohibition of intermarriage or the Abrahamitic sign of the covenant is not sufficiently indicative of Israel's priest-dignity.

I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I see the day dawning when the larger view and the larger life of the new age of which the Jew partakes in so eminent a degree, will suggest religious practices and symbolic observances offering practical lessons of universal love, peace and righteousness to the Jew as humanity's teacher and pattern.

Where pessimists see nothing but decline and decay, I see a gradual transformation, leading to a rejuvenation of Judaism and a broadening out of its scope and its sphere of influence.

Ceremonies are the poetry of religion; they invest life with the beauty of holiness. The need of such has been felt by Judaism all the more, because images and signs representing the Deity have at all times been scrupulously shunned. Imperceptibly, however, old ceremonies are transformed and finally replaced by new ones, while some have become distinctive features, which must be upheld, to keep it from disintegration. As Morris Joseph in his "Judaism as Life and Creed" correctly says: "That a law or an observance tends to keep up Jewish separateness is by itself no valid argument for its retention. To justify its continued existence it must show that it still serves a moral and religious purpose, that its spiritual vitality is unexhausted. Mere separateness is not an ideal to be cherished. Rightly conceived, it is but a means to an end, and that end is the effectiveness of the Jew as a religious instrument. If it fail to secure that end, it is an unmixed evil." "Break the barrel but let not one drop of the precious wine flow out!" This is the way the rabbis characterize a seemingly impossible task. Such is the problem Reform has to solve. Under the influence of time the old forms crumble and fall. We must see to it that the fragrance, the spirit of the old, be not lost, as we pass on to the new.

25.

SOLOMON SCHECHTER.*

WHEN one of the world's great sages dies, all mourn the loss of one near and dear to them, says the Talmud. Solomon Schechter's death is an irreparable loss, not merely to our sister-institution, the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, whose illustrious head and powerful reorganizer he was, but to the entire American Jewry and the whole learned world as well. And it is especially befitting that we, the Board of Governors, the Faculty and the Student body of the Hebrew Union College, should give public testimony to the high esteem in which the departed master was held by us, in a special Memorial Service given in his honor, all the more so, as the impression which his genial personality and the beautiful words of wisdom he spoke on the occasion of the dedication of this, our new College Building, made upon us, is still treasured in our hearts as a precious memento. When Jacob the patriarch was being gathered to his fathers, the Midrash tells us, all the royalties of Egypt deposited their crowns upon his bier, and, seeing these tokens of honor bestowed upon so simple a man, the Canaanites cried forth: "This is indeed a great mourning unto

*Memorial address delivered at the Chapel of the Hebrew Union College on December 18, 1915.

Egypt," and they, too, laid down their crowns to honor the patriarch. So on two continents do Jewish and Christian scholars alike testify by their grief that a great man and a prince of learning has gone from our midst.

However, the object of a Memorial Address is not to voice grief at the loss sustained, but to give expression to the truth that "the righteous are by their very death ushered into a life of greater influence and power;" nay more, that death lifts them to a loftier plane where their noble figure appears illumined by the virtues they displayed, to make them a greater object of love, while their foibles and shortcomings pale before the good they have accomplished. And yet our portraiture must above all be true and not have a false coloring. Judaism tolerates no apotheosis. Our greatest and holiest of men, even a Moses, are depicted with all their human frailty, so that by their humanity they may become patterns by which to mould our lives, a monition and inspiration to guide and influence us in our endeavors and aims.

In this light I propose to present to you the career and life-work of Solomon Schechter as scholar and sage, as writer and discoverer of great literary treasures, as theologian and conservative leader of thought, as a personality of rare gifts and charms, and at the same time point out to you in what direction he should be of lasting influence also for us of the Reform wing who differ from him in doctrine and practice.

To Rabbi Jose ben Chalafta a Roman matron well versed in Scripture came with the question:

"What strange praise are you bestowing on your God in saying: 'He giveth wisdom to the wise' (Dan. II, 21). That He maketh the unwise wise would have been a much better declaration of His power." Whereupon R. Jose answered: "Would you hand one of your costly and delicate ornaments to any ordinary person you meet, and not rather lend it only to one who knows how to handle it well? It takes the wise man to make good use of wisdom and learning." Wisdom says: "I love those who love me" and initiates only the few favored ones into her secrets. Only genius possesses the master-key to knowledge, penetrating into the core of things. Yet like the wild stream that rushes down from the high hills and has to cut its path through the rocks, gathering strength for its wide march to the distant sea from the very obstacles it has to overcome, so does genius derive strength from privation and want by its very limitation and concentration.

Like almost all the scholars coming from the East, young Schechter lacked the opportunities of a liberal, that is, classic and scientific, education, but he was compensated by the power of genius, which by intuition unlocked for him the innermost depth of Jewish lore which his keen intellect mastered so quickly.

Schechter's cradle stood in that portion of Roumania which was the hot-bed of Chasidism. He himself told me: "The blood of generations of Chasidim runs through my veins." And this accounts for his predilection for mysticism, his fondness for "the saints of Safed" and their miraculous deeds.

"The Chasidim" was the subject of a paper with which he first stepped before an English-speaking audience. He understood the psychology of the mystics, which remained a book with seven seals for such historians as Graetz and Geiger and their followers. In fact, he inherited from the Chasidim the love and zeal for all that makes for saintliness and holiness, which forms such a prominent point of view in his Rabbinic theology. The ethical works of the medieval mystics were, like the Talmud and Midrash, his daily companions, and he loved to exhibit to the visitor his rare collection of the Techinnot and Bakashot—books of private devotion and meditation, Hebrew and Judeo-German. So he brought home to us the lives of Nahmanides and Baal Shem Tob in attractive garb, and he found delight in Thomas a Kempis' "Imitatio Dei," in Pascal and Amiel's letters as well as in Chayim Vital and Yehuda ha Chasid. Hence also his insistence on greater enthusiasm for Israel's heritage and a better cultivation of the emotional side of religion. Above all is his constant accentuation of the spirituality of Judaism, its Law and its ceremonies the heritage of his Chasidean ancestry and environment, forming a striking contrast to the rationalism of the Western Jew since the days of Mendelssohn.

On the other hand, his Talmudic studies, in which he excelled at an early age, developed to a high degree his mental capacities, and so there arose in him a certain duality of view and purpose. The reasoning power, sharpened by the study of the Halakah, he says, led many of the Eastern Synagogue either to

the beginnings of the "Juedische Wissenschaft," for which the Gaon of Wilna stands as a prototype, or to heresy and doubt such as may be traced in Krochmal. It became most typical in Solomon Maimon. Now I have it from his own lips: After he left the narrow surroundings of home and entered the wide world with its dazzling new views of life, he passed through a crisis in which none but Meyer Friedman of the Vienna Beth ha Midrash, his teacher and friend to whom he set such a noble monument in his "Seminary Addresses," became his safe guide, "or else"—these were his very words:—"I might have taken the same stand in Judaism that you Reformers maintain." Meyer Friedman, one of the finest students of the Midrashic literature—while Isaac Hirsch Weiss, his other teacher, was more of a Talmudist—implanted into Schechter's soul that profound love and at the same time that broad historical and critical view of Rabbinic literature that determined and fashioned his whole life-work, which confined itself to the products of Rabbinism. He made him a conscientious student of the Midrashic texts by comparison with older editions and rare manuscripts, and thus he became the searcher for rare literary treasures, and finally the editor of valuable works with rich instructive notes such as the Aboth di R. Nathan, the Midrash Ha-Gadol and others which won for him a world-wide fame.

To the Berlin University and Hochschule he came as a mature Rabbinic scholar who would not take on a new view of the past or present, and with probably the same aversion to Bible criticism as

a fellow student of mine exhibited under my eyes when he at every critical remark made by the professor accompanied his notes with the words: *Chas Weshalom* "God beware." Neither did Steinthal's mythology nor any other German method of investigation attract him. Geiger was dead, and his historical view of Judaism was, indeed, too radical for him to find a responsive chord in his heart, but Steinschneider's vast biographical material and Israel Lewy's strange combination of a radical Talmud critic and a saint in the observance of the Rabbinic Code fascinated him.

It was Claude Montefiore who, while studying under Frankl and Steinthal, discovered in Schechter the rough diamond that would require but slight polishing in order to shine forth in brilliant radiance out of dozens of sparkling facets. He brought him to England, introduced him to the literary world of Cambridge and London, made him write one valuable essay after another for the "Jewish Quarterly Review" edited by him and Israel Abrahams, and aided him materially in the edition of Aboth di R. Nathan in attractive classical form.

England was thus the making of Schechter, and he, in turn, roused the young English Jewry from slumber, creating, with the help of a circle of young men that rallied around him, a Jewish renaissance in a land in which wealth and social prestige together with a proud and all-powerful hierarchical orthodoxy had kept the lamps of Jewish learning dim and untrimmed. Soon the learned English world realized that a man of power equipped with all

the ammunition for the battle of the Lord had come into their midst. Endowed with a phenomenal memory and a still more marked capacity for fine, vigorous and lucid diction, acquired by a marvelous absorption of English literature, whether classic, scientific or novelistic, and a large reserve fund of pithy sayings and clever stories culled from everywhere, he soon impressed old and young, Christian and Jew, by the rare gifts of his intellect and the lightning flashes of his ever-ready wit. Elected as Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge, he captivated his hearers or readers by his novel methods of presentation of Jewish history and literature, and by the search-light he cast upon the three thousand years' work of the schools and the Synagog in interpreting the Scripture, the influence of which he also traced in New Testament teachings. It is, he declared, not the letter in its primary meaning, but the spirit which gave it a secondary meaning, and this was ever changing and shifting in accordance with the views and needs of time and environment and through assimilation of originally foreign elements. You see here that in principle Schechter in England was a progressive. Only his palliative was what he called Traditional Judaism which holds fast to the ancient practice, rejecting innovations not approved of by "Catholic Israel." He thus claimed to represent after English fashion the broader Jewish High Church, while the narrow Orthodoxy around him he characterized as Low Church.

His influence was in the ascendant when he was induced to go to Italy and examine the valuable

Rabbinic manuscripts in the various libraries there, and he returned with results which enriched the store of knowledge in the field of Haggadic lore. But the zenith of his fame was reached when, in connection with his Ben Sira studies and after his discovery of a leaf of the Hebrew Ben Sira manuscript handed him by Cambridge lady-travelers who had brought it with them from Egypt, he was sent to Cairo to investigate the contents of the Genizah. He came back not merely with the larger part of the original Ben Sira, the publications of which stirred and astonished the entire learned world, but also with tens of thousands of scraps and scrolls of parchment and paper constituting an inexhaustible mine of literary treasures, Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic, the contents of which were and are destined to add entirely new chapters to our history of Jew and Judaism, and to open new roads to scientific investigations for generations of scholars. The whole period of the Geonim is now being re-written in consequence of these new finds, and our view of the Sadducean, the Samaritan and the Karaite sects as well as of the Falashas will have to undergo a transformation, in view of Schechter's publication of the document he found, emanating from a hitherto altogether unknown sect in Damascus which called itself Zadokites, and which has become a puzzle and an unsolved problem for the student.

But the twenty years of activity in England—where, in fact, all the works published by him afterwards were substantially written—were but the preparation for his great, and alas, only too brief life-

work as head of the New York Seminary since 1902. Two years before he received this call, I was privileged to spend a glorious day with him at Cambridge, and we both found that, notwithstanding all our difference of opinion, we had so much in common, and that we felt especially deeply concerned in the imperative need of a positive Jewish theology for our time, the importance of which is so lamentably underrated by the average Jewish scholar. We realized alike the demand for a constructive system of Jewish thought, which should be at the same time an impregnable fortress of defense against the Church dogma and the Christian interpretation of Scripture on the one hand, and against the ravages of a destructive Bible Criticism and a rampant skepticism and unbelief on the other.

He then looked eagerly forward to the larger field soon to be opened for him on American soil, longing, as he said he did, for "a Jewish atmosphere" which he missed at Cambridge, and I, on my part, indulged in the dream of working side by side with him in New York like Hillel and Shammai with the maxim: "Both views echo the voice of the living God." Providence ordained it otherwise. Our spheres of activity led us far asunder. During the first year of his stay in New York our relations were of the friendliest nature, nay, I may say, intimate, sweetened by an almost daily intercourse and exchange of views on scientific and religious questions. Later on, our mutual friendship and esteem was never diminished nor interfered with by occasional public controversies carried on for the sake of the cause

we both held dear and sacred and prompted only by love of God and truth.

Naturally, the new environment as well as the new responsibilities as head of the conservative school led him with his ardor and passionate soul to advocate what he termed "Reasonable Orthodoxy," and he would occasionally become a bitter assailant of Reform in which he beheld "Christianizing" tendencies, and which, owing to the shallowness, the cant, and ignorance displayed in many a liberal pulpit, seemed to him, like Hellenistic Judaism of yore, to be in danger of drifting away altogether from the moorings of the Synagog. All the more he insisted on the preservation of the old landmarks, the old liturgy and ceremonies in Synagog and home. As to your "Prophetic Judaism," he said wittily: "One cannot live on oxygen only." And as to those who want to reduce Judaism to a system of social justice and social service, he sarcastically points to the ancient law concerning the practice of benevolence and its effect on Jewish life, saying: "All these works were done during the centuries before the ugly word Altruism was invented." Thus he endeavored at least to achieve what the rabbis ascribe to the Men of the Great Synagogue: "They received the attribute of greatness, because they restored the law to its pristine glory."

Solomon Schechter, with the staff of eminent scholars at his side, raised the New York Seminary to a high standard of efficiency and learning, and thereby strengthened greatly the cause of Orthodoxy. In fact, he made enlightened Conservatism more power-

ful, more popular in the East, nay, fashionable. But he achieved the far greater task of awakening a new zeal and love for Jewish learning and a new interest in Jewish literature in all circles. He brought about a revival of Jewish learning in this country. He loved with his whole heart the land of Abraham Lincoln, whom he admired and whose life he fondly studied. He filled us all, consciously or unconsciously, with deeper respect and reverence for all the great men and the grand doings of the past. But the chief lesson he preached, not only to his disciples at the Seminary but to all of us, teachers and learners, is the lesson so much needed, of greater spirituality. When studying Bible or Talmud, the literature or the history of the Jew, teachers and disciples dwell too much on the surface of things, on the words and sentences, the outward facts and forms, instead of penetrating to the core and kernel, to the soul of prophet and psalmist, of sage and saint. Get at the soul of men and things, the soul of the Jew and Judaism, the religious substance, the flood-gate of holiness, and you will feel the quickening power of the Torah, the burning flame of Sinai's fire, and you will not go to Golgotha for the understanding of our past and of our duty to the world. Be not followers of the Church, which has her best from us, but leaders; not imitators, but masters of the Law. This is the wholesome monition of Schechter's theology which should be again heeded by us, as it was actually heeded and felt by our great Reform pioneers. Like yon father in the fable who before dying said to his sons: "There are hidden treasures in the acres I

left to you, dig for them," and when they digged and digged, the promised treasures could not be found, but when the harvest time came, behold, they reaped ten-fold of what they had gathered in former years, and thus the father's words were verified—so does Solomon Schechter say to all who study the Law, the history and literature of Israel: "Dig, dig deeper and ever deeper into the soil of the Torah, and you will reap ever richer fruitage, untold blessings of the spirit."

And after all, we of the Reform wing need more of the spirit, more of the soul of Judaism, which is its religious truth, just because we look more to the essentials and less to the forms, because our field of study should comprise the whole process of evolution of the Jewish truth from its very beginning, and extend to the very end of human history as the scope of our Messianic mission. To us the Torah begins with man as the son of God, and ends with the whole family of men, to be made one by God's law of justice and truth. Our Zion is not a nationalistic concern, but the symbol of a world-union established upon a universal allegiance to the Only One and Holy God of Israel. And let me say in this connection that Schechter's Zionism aimed at nothing but the full unfolding of the religious soul of Jew and Judaism, whereas a Zionism without religion and without God, the so-called Nationalism, is most vehemently denounced by him as un-Jewish.

So let us thank God to-day for having given us in Solomon Schechter a banner-bearer of light, a man of the spirit, an interpreter of Israel's soul, a zealous

champion of the Torah, even though he represented, as he said to us nearly three years ago from this pulpit, "His Majesty's Opposition." Judaism always had, and in fact will always need, its two opposing forces, Conservative and Progressive, just as the stars in heaven are carried along by a centripetal and centrifugal power to keep them on the right track; just as the bird while soaring along the sky needs its two wings to fly steadily onward. Each wing must work as the right balancing force to the other. Thus there will be mutual recognition and helpfulness. This spirit was especially manifested by Schechter in his later years.

Thus we, the representatives of the two wings of American Judaism, have worked together in mutual esteem and fellowship at the translation of the Bible, which was completed but a few weeks ago, and we looked forward to the taking up of the more arduous task of editing and translating the master works of the Jewish Classics under the chairmanship of Solomon Schechter, who was actually the sponsor of the great undertaking, while the generosity of Jacob H. Schiff furnished the capital for the same. God in His inscrutable wisdom has summoned the revered master to the Academy on high, and we, his co-workers, shall sadly miss the unique personality, the venerable man with the leonine head, who was so human with his healthy laughter, his sledge-hammer wit and his humorous stories, and again with his fierce outbursts of temper and his terrible scolding and condemning, and yet so true and loyal and full only of zeal for God and His Law. He is now

with his completed life-work before the eternal Master to receive his reward, and to radiate light and blessing unending from above among men on earth. So let us bless God and the memory of His servant, saying with the Psalmist: "Bless ye all His angels mighty in strength, His servants fulfilling His will." Amen.